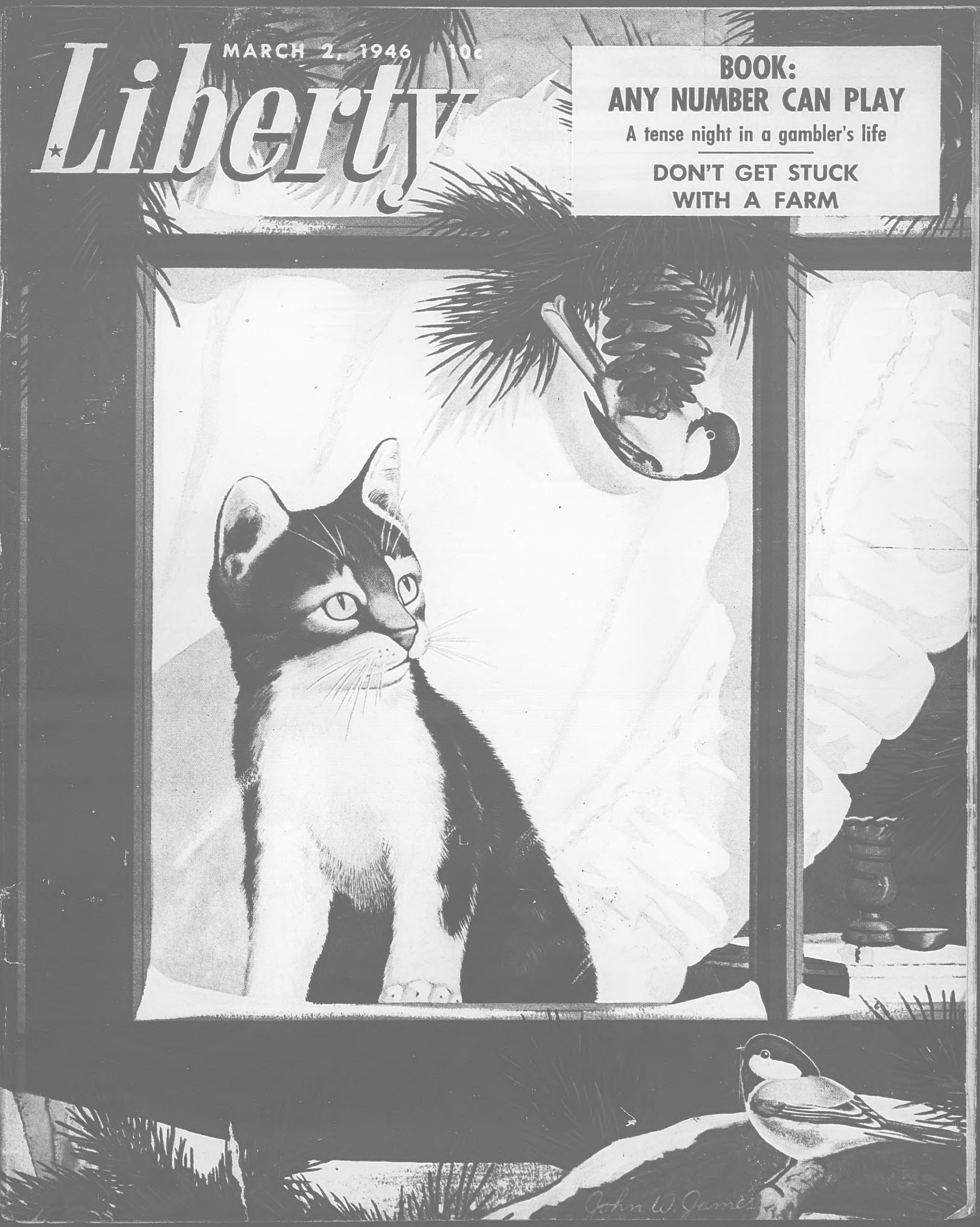
MARCH 2, 1946 10c

Liberty

BOOK:
ANY NUMBER CAN PLAY
A tense night in a gambler's life

DON'T GET STUCK WITH A FARM



KING MEANS BEST IN EVERYTHING

"The Golden Gate Bridge," painted especially for the Brown-Forman Collection by Robert A. Johnson.

BROWN-FORMAN'S KING OF PRE-WAR WHISKY*

KING

Blended Whisky

Serve King to those who deserve King! Brown-Forman's King is the whisky treat that's de LIGHT ful in smooth, mellow flavor—full-flavored, satisfying, too. Truly Brown-Forman's King of pre-war whisky—the choice of the most discriminating.

BROWN-FORMAN DISTILLERS CORPORATION
At Louisville in Kentucky

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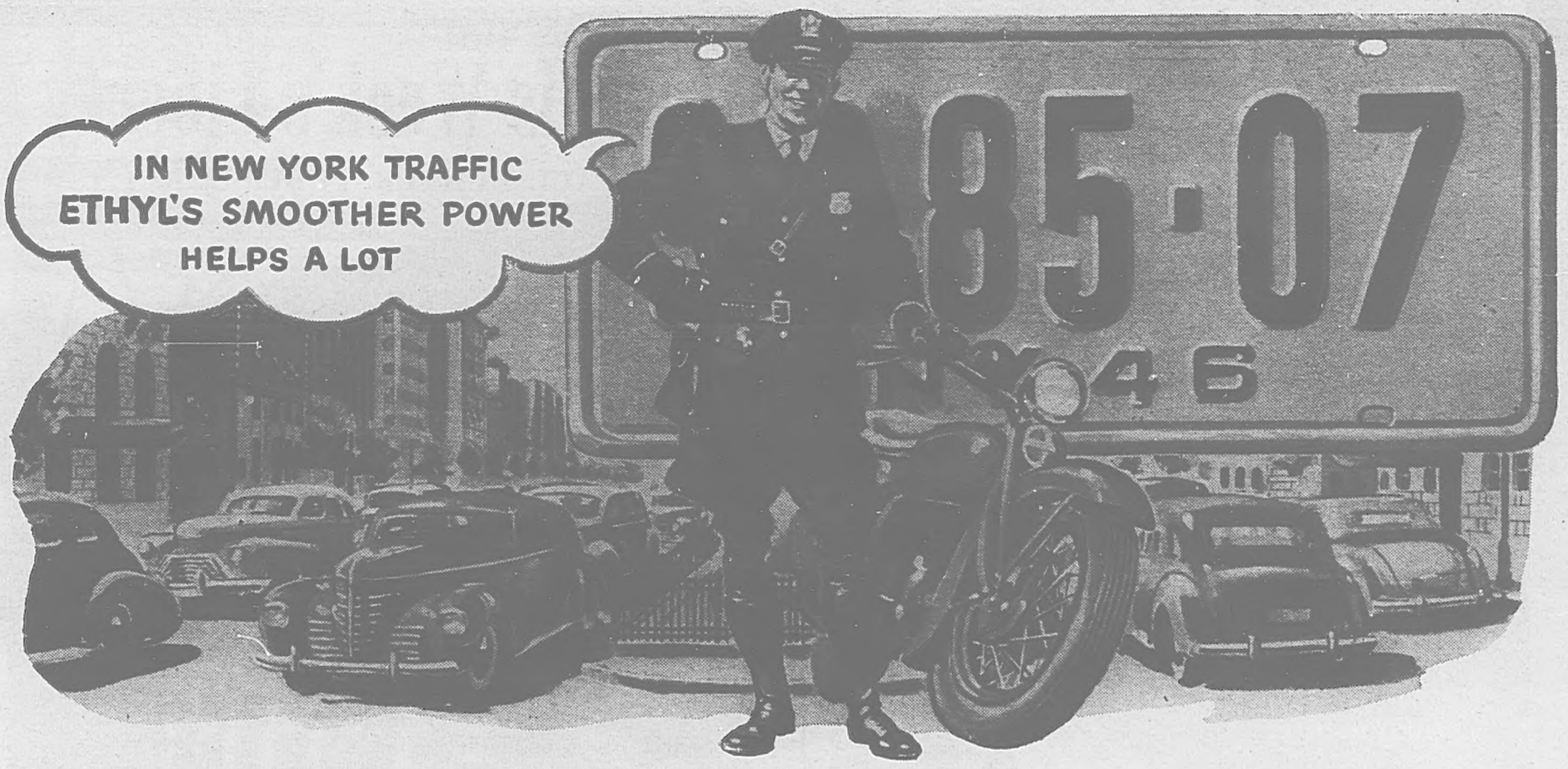
**Blended Whisky, 86 Proof. The straight whiskies in this product are 51 months or more old. 40% straight whiskies; 60% grain neutral spirits.*



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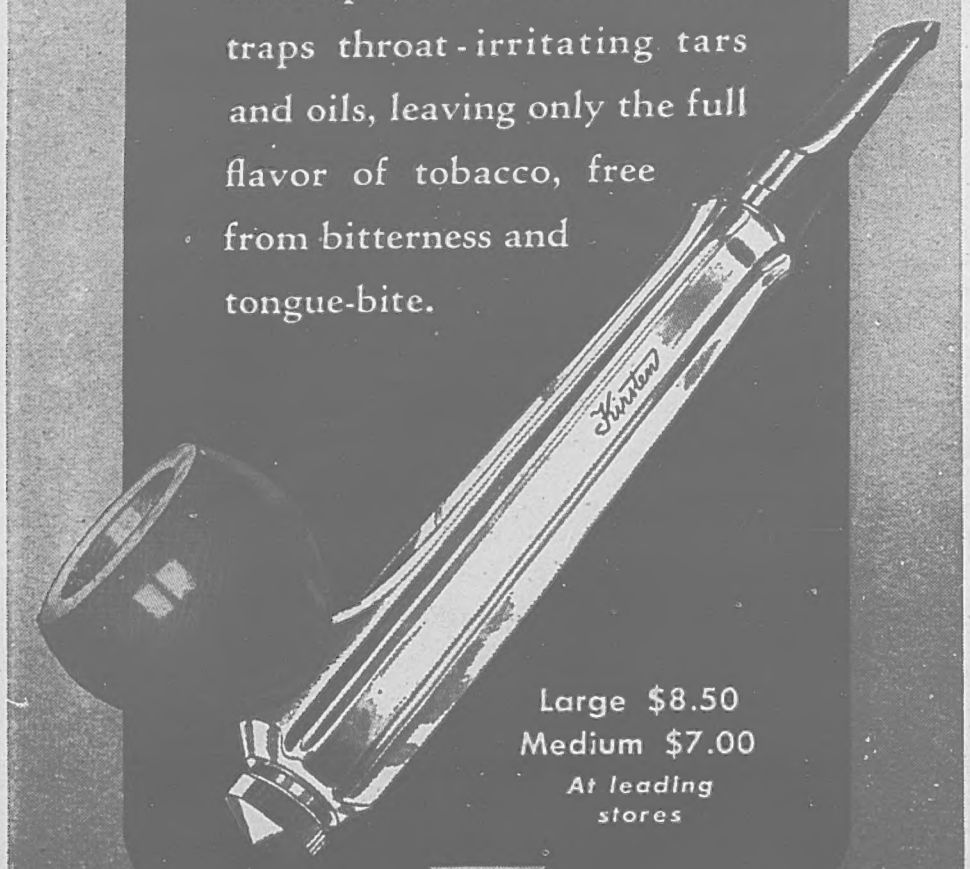
COOLER...CLEANER SMOKING PLEASURE

If you enjoy smoking a pipe, you'll get even *greater* pleasure from a *Kirsten Pipe*. Its light-weight radiator cools each puff, condenses and traps throat-irritating tars and oils, leaving only the full flavor of tobacco, free from bitterness and tongue-bite.



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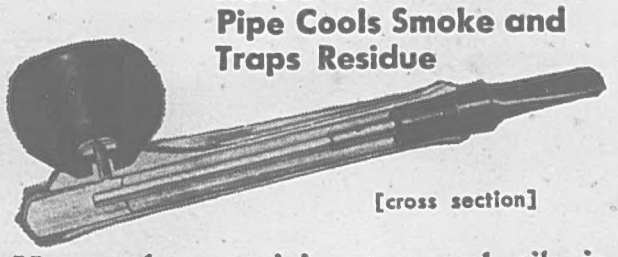
"RADIATOR" PIPE

Here's How the Kirsten Pipe Cools Smoke and Traps Residue



[cross section]

Hot smoke containing tars and oils is drawn into the radiator where thin walls radiate heat and cool the smoke. Residues condense on the walls of the radiator where they remain until removed by pushing tissue through radiator, using ramrod attached to mouthpiece. Intake tube suspended in center prevents moisture from being drawn into the mouth.

KIRSTEN PIPE CO., Dept. 248, Seattle 1, Washington

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Painted by John W. James

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VOX POP

"The Voice of the People"

LaGUARDIA SPEAKS FOR LIBERTY

New York, N. Y.—We congratulate you on your keen foresight in choosing F. H. LaGuardia to speak to the people on Sunday evenings. His words will be a beacon of light for the masses.—*Mrs. Joseph Conte.*

Omaha, Neb.—For my part, please let the Little Flower keep to his

funny papers. As a "commentator" he offers nothing constructive.—*Robt. R. O'Niel.*

Los Angeles, Calif.—LaGuardia's debut was O.K. He said more in five minutes and to the point than all our politicians in Washington, D. C.—*Mr. and Mrs. P. De Genner.*

GEOGRAPHICAL HIGH JINKS

San Francisco, Calif.—William E. Taylor really hit the jackpot with the geographical stunt he pulled on Terminal Island in Vox Pop (January 19). He says it's a receiving station in San Francisco Bay. The last time I saw it, it was still between San Pedro and Long Beach. Take another look in Frisco Bay, Willy, and you'll see that one is Treasure Island.—*Clifford O'Hearne, ARM2/c.*

FOR THE LANDLORDS

Goose Creek, Texas—The article, So You Want to Rent, by Stacy V. Jones (January 12) gives only the tenant's side of the question. I'd like to tell you the landlord's side. I had a number of tenants (teachers) who asked me to reduce the rents as they had had reductions in their salaries. I did—with the understanding that when their salaries were adjusted they would again assume the normal low rent. They got their salaries adjusted and paid the regular rents again. But then the OPA comes along and arbitrarily issues an order to put the rents back below par. Since then, maintenance costs have skyrocketed, and when we protested to the OPA to put the rents back to normal, all we got was a flat refusal.

This is just a sample of the injustices and high-handed politics issued by crackpots out of Washington.—*E. S. Cathriner.*

CORRECTION, PLEASE

Cleveland, Ohio—In Morris Markey's article, The Big Four of the High Iron (January 5), a statement is made that "the big four brotherhoods, with the exception of the B. of L. F. & E., refuse to tell the public what they do with their money . . . refused to give this writer access to their reports."

Mr. Markey has evidently overlooked the fact that among the documents sent him by the undersigned was a printed report of the Board of Trustees of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen for the year 1944, which, he was advised, would give him the information he sought concerning the Brotherhood's finances.—*A. F. Whitney, President.*

New York, N. Y.—In my article on the railroads I made a mistake. As I was gathering material for the

article, Mr. A. F. Whitney, president of the B.R.T., wrote me that he was forwarding to me a financial report. I never got it. But that does not absolve me of error, for I am certain that he either sent it or fully intended to send it, and I should have communicated with him further.

I regret that I said the B.R.T. was secretive in its financial records, when they plainly intended to provide me with those records. There was certainly no intention to be unfair toward this union, or biased.—*Morris Markey.*

STRIKING SYMBOL

Omaha, Neb.—The picture of the little French boy and girl in The Camera Eye (January 5) is indeed touching. To me it is a striking symbol of the sorrow and privation that the children of France must have undergone during the war.—*D. L. Bergman.*

Today's Higher Property Values

can be lost in tomorrow's ashes

A SIMPLE inquiry into the present value of your home and belongings may bring you the shocking picture of what fire could cost you today—if your property is *under-insured.*

The value of your home, depending on where you live, is almost certain to be from 30% to 50% more today than in 1939.

The increase in value of your furniture, rugs, clothing, jewelry may well represent additional thousands in assets you are in danger of losing if fire destroys your home and belongings.

Fire losses every day are awakening home owners to these tremendous increases in property values—too late! We who live and work in the fire insurance business see this daily evidence piling up—evidence of the tragic and needless losses home owners are suffering because of inadequate insurance based on out-of-date values.

This is a serious appeal to act now in your own interest—to protect these increased values of yours.

In this critical, nationwide situation—your fire insurance company offers you the services of your local fire insurance agent or broker. A telephone call to him today may save you thousands.

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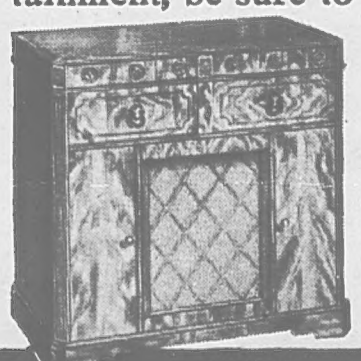
***TUNE IN EARL GODWIN*—Every Thursday Evening on Blue "A.B.C." Network — See your newspaper for time and station**

For Superb Entertainment — Choose a HOWARD *Radio!*

For well over two decades, Howard Radios have been noted for tone, famed for performance and acclaimed for value.

Howard Radios and Phonographs with automatic changers for 1946 are especially outstanding for their advanced engineering features and attractive styling—they have *everything* for your greater listening pleasure.

If you would command all that is best in radio and recorded entertainment, be sure to see and hear the new Howard Radios. You'll be certain then, that your new radio should be a Howard.



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PIONEERS IN FM RADIO

America's Oldest Radio Manufacturer

JUST BETWEEN OURSELVES

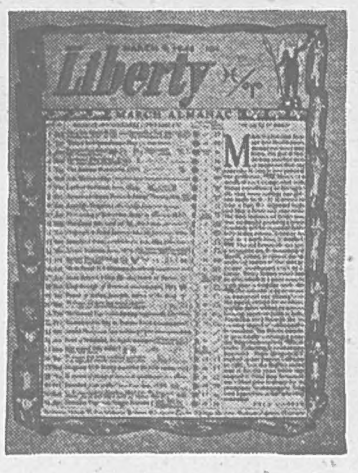
EXPERT ON FARM PROBLEMS

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN has been free-lancing since 1942, and economics is his forte. A contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a regular contributor to Barron's (the financial weekly), he's also a leading American specialist in Australian affairs. He first visited that country in 1927, went back as a Carnegie Fellow (1937-38), and returned from his last trip in 1940. He's studied agricultural problems there and in New Zealand as well as in the United States. DON'T GET STUCK WITH A FARM, he says on page 13, and he ought to know.

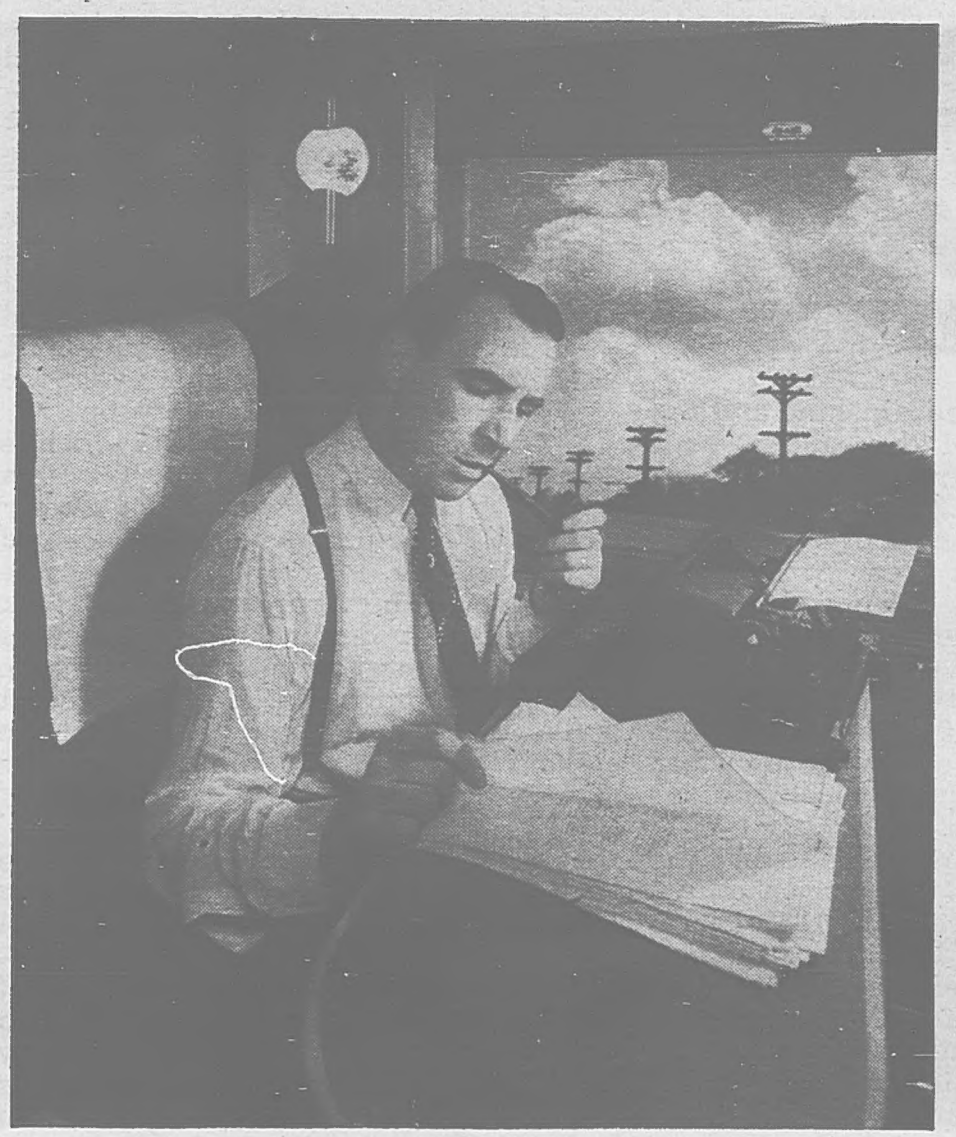
SCARLOTT TELLS OF SILICONES

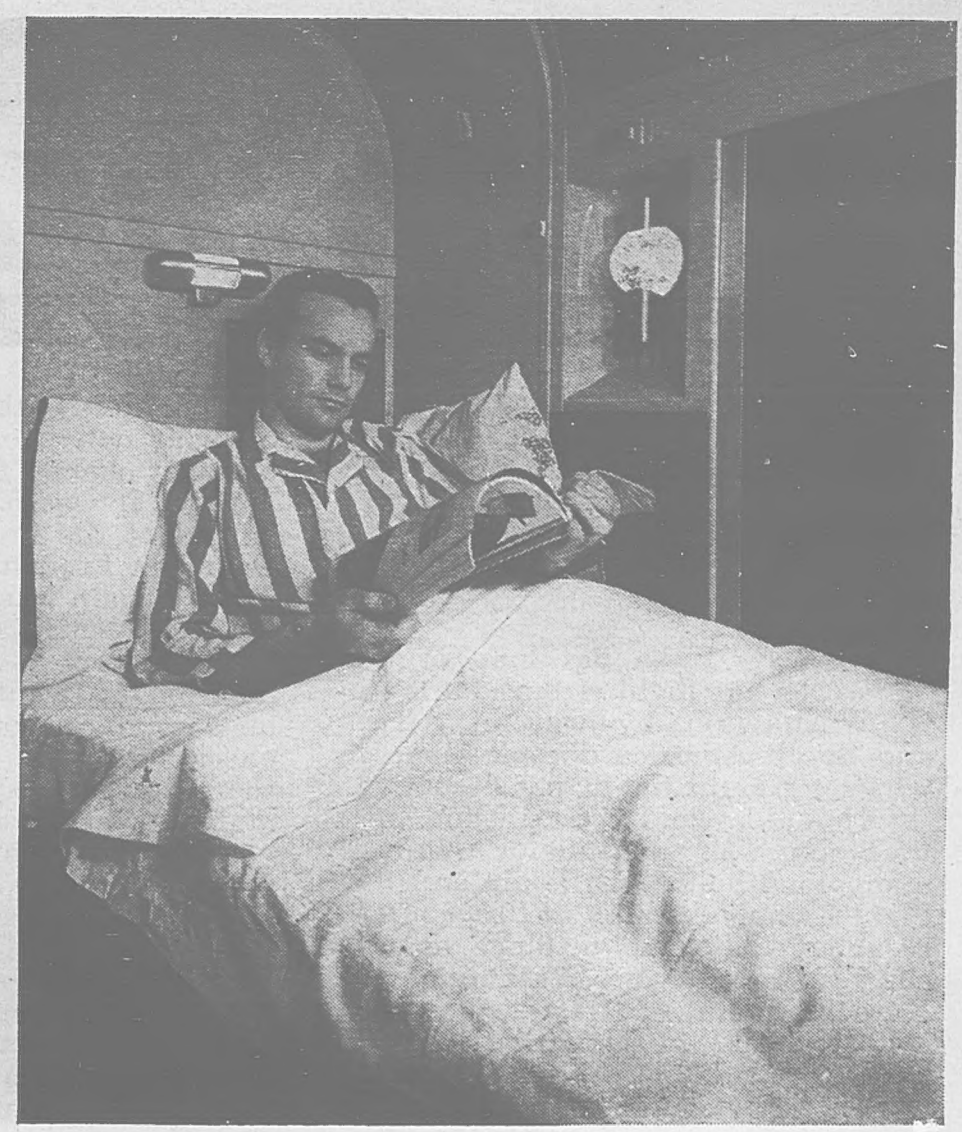
CHARLES A. SCARLOTT, the author of SILICONES—MIRACLE MATERIAL, joined forces with Westinghouse in 1926, a year after he was graduated from the University of Arizona. He started on the test floor; within three years became managing editor of the Electric Journal. Editor of the Westinghouse Engineer since it was founded in 1941, for the past ten years he's written an annual account of the accomplishments of the company's engineers and research men.

NEXT WEEK



SO YOU WANT TO BUILD? Here, in a nutshell, are your chances. And don't snicker. Some homes *are* going up, and, according to Stacy V. Jones, if you know your way around, one of them might be yours. . . . Ray Milland has always been a handsome, pleasant addition to any Hollywood film. Now, with his fifty-third picture, he becomes a sensational actor. In FAME OVER A WEEKEND, Lloyd Shearer gives you a new switch on the old story of a movie "find." . . . Does your income-tax return just get filed and forgotten, or is HONESTY THE BEST TAX POLICY? Hear what Maxine Davis has to say about how the Treasury boys keep tabs on you. . . . Zachary Ball's short story, A RIGHT WOMAN, is a fascinating suspicion-by-suspicion account of jealousy and where it leads. . . . In Liberty's Book Condensation, THE PEACOCK SHEDS HIS TAIL, Alice Tisdale Hobart tells a poignant story of love and conflict south of the border.





You'll travel in a private room *at a bargain price!*

New sleeping cars are coming!

And these *new kinds of cars*—of which the Duplex-Roomette car is one—will maintain the mastery of travel hospitality for which Pullman has been known for more than 80 years.

Here, for example, is the *bargain-in-luxury* the Duplex-Roomette gives you:

Private Sitting Room!

Look at the picture at the left and see how you'll travel by day.

That room is *all your own*—a private room equipped with every comfort and convenience that you'd have at home; even some you may not have, like air-conditioning.

Whether you want to work enroute or just lounge in that soft-cushioned seat, you'll be snug and safe and comfortable. Plenty of lights! Heat that you regulate yourself! And service? Just buzz the bell and see how *proud* Pullman porters are of their art in serving you!

Private Bedroom!

Look at the room at the right and see what happens at night!

Just touch a lever and presto! there's your bed. It's big and soft—with crisp, clean sheets all ready to dream away the miles in as you speed *safely and dependably* to your destination.

Next morning, the bed disappears and you have *lots* of space for dressing. Your own washbowl and toilet, too.

Yes, when you go Pullman—day or night, in any weather—you'll enjoy *comfort, service and safety* that no other way of going places fast can match!

Bargain Price!

The *new design* of the Duplex-Roomette car (indicated by its staggered windows) brings the cost of private rooms *way down.*

Between St. Louis and Chicago, for instance, you could travel in a private room, at present rates, for *only 30c more than the price of a lower berth!*

GO PULLMAN

THE SAFEST, MOST COMFORTABLE WAY OF GOING PLACES FAST—THE SUREST WAY OF GETTING THERE IN TIME!

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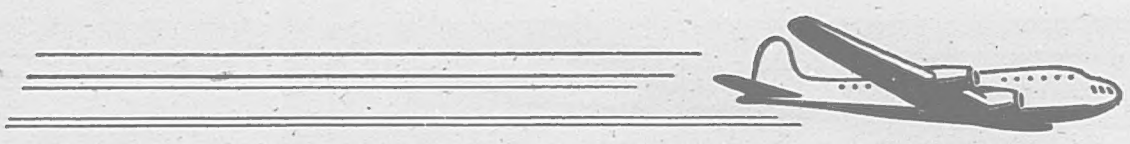

ON THE BEAM

BY WAYNE PARRISH

Here comes Queenie—Casablanca to Dakar, then across to Brazil, then home—flying time, 47 hours. Hats off to her crew!

JUDGING by a flat map of the world, a flight from Paris to Washington by way of Africa and South America doesn't seem so very long. But a flat map is deceptive. Study a globe and you will find that the "bulge" at the equator requires many long hours in the air and the flight's whole distance of 10,500 miles is about the same distance as the shortest route from Washington to Karachi, India.

Last week, in On the Beam, I brought our B-17 Flying Fortress, Quivering Queenie, as far as Casablanca, first of the five stops on the way to the U. S. A. Instead of taking off from this French Moroccan port shortly after midnight, as planned, we had to wait until we could find a navigator who would become a member of our crew for the remainder of the journey.

There was a pool of navigators at Casablanca, Army men who were waiting for planes to join up with and would be discharged from the service when they reached home. They were all eager to join up—Christmas at home! The lucky one proved to be Lieutenant Sidney Meyerson of 840 West End Avenue, New York City, who had been overseas seven months. By nine o'clock in the morning we were all set for the next hop to Dakar.

Our pilot was Lieutenant Colonel William T. Arthur, a tall sandy-haired Nebraskan who had logged 10,000 hours of flying, mostly with American Airlines, and was just coming home after serving as chief of operations for the European Division of Air Transport Command. Our co-pilot was Captain Jack Gardner of Philadelphia, and a substitute was Colonel William Westlake, director of public relations for the A.A.F. during most of the wartime, who was returning from a temporary assignment in Berlin, and who was a Command pilot himself.

Not long after taking off southward from Casablanca all semblance of vegetation disappeared. For hundreds of miles to Dakar along the bleak African coast there was nothing but sand and rock. One country we traversed from one end to the other was Rio de Oro, belonging to Spain, and if there is a more desolate part of the world I have yet to see it. Nonetheless, the sunshine and the brilliant colors of the sand were a pleasant change from grim northern Europe. It was 5.25 P. M. when we landed at the fine Army airport at Dakar in French West Africa.

Here again was a delay. Quivering Queenie needed an inspection of the standard type given to aircraft that have flown twenty-five hours. With an ample crew of mechanics such a check doesn't require much time, but there wasn't a single mechanic remaining at Dakar.

And here again it's plain that the unsung hero of the war was the mechanic. Our crew chief, Corporal George Corich of Detroit, had to undertake the inspection himself. He had two Senegalese Negro helpers, but they were in no sense mechanics. Quivering Queenie had to be in top shape for the transatlantic crossing—there could be no mistake or carelessness. It was this twenty-one-year-old crew chief who worked and sweated the night through to make sure the aircraft was in perfect condition. There are few pilots in the country who won't admit that their efficient flying records have depended upon similar able youngsters—yet the mechanics have gone almost unpublicized.

Probably no fewer than 7,000 four-engined bombers had passed through Dakar during and immediately after the war. But by December 17, when we passed through, the U. S. personnel had been sharply reduced and the airport was pretty largely quiet. We were on one of the last bombers ever to use that route again.

It was ten o'clock the next morning before we took off and headed out to sea for the long ocean crossing. On such hops one just doesn't think about a forced landing in the water, and indeed such forced landings have been amazingly few. We slept and read, and then bounced about briefly when we passed through the ever-present tropical "front." There was even some hail, although we were right over the equator.

Instead of going to Natal, which is usual, we headed for the Brazilian port of Fortaleza which has a very fine U. S.-built airport. We arrived late in the afternoon, had a fine dinner at the Army mess, and took off just at dusk for another long hop to Georgetown, British Guiana. It was midnight when we arrived at the U. S. Army field there, and the ham and eggs at the Army mess tasted very fine.

WE had crossed the equator twice in the same day. After refueling we took off at 3.20 A. M. on the last hop to the U. S. A., arriving at Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, just before noon. The last leg of the trip to Washington was completed by 7.30 P. M., Wednesday, three days after leaving Paris. We arrived in five inches of snow.

Four continents, from cold to the tropics and back into the cold, in three days. The actual flying time had been just under forty-seven hours. Yet not one of the nine on board was overtired.

By the time this page appears most of the Army airports which were bustling with activity a year ago will have been abandoned or will be managed by a skeleton force. Commercial uses won't be large enough to maintain many of them in their entirety. And there are many routes flown by thousands of aircraft that won't see another airplane for a long time. The wartime routes of the bombers simply have no peacetime use whatever.

Neither of these is Queenie. The plane's a Commonwealth postwar Skyranger, soon available to private fliers. The one who *isn't* plain? That would be telling you!

Anytime is a good time to visit MEXICO!

For change, rest and recreation, board an American Airlines Flagship for Mexico. In a few hours you can be in a vivid, exciting land of enchanting variety. Telephone your nearest American Airlines ticket office for complete information.

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EWING GALLOWAY PHOTO

Before the war, his toil netted him $15 weekly on a $7,000 investment.

Liberty
THE MAGAZINE OF A FREE PEOPLE

With a million vets wanting farms, it's not how to keep 'em on the farm but how to keep 'em off. The birds, the bees, and the flowers are okay, but farming today is a tougher row to hoe than you think

Don't Get Stuck with a Farm

BY C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

SURVEYS reveal that a million men in the armed services have said they want to go on farms after they're discharged. Some of these servicemen came from farms and presumably know what they are doing. But many don't, and this also applies to former war-plant workers who have the farm idea. These men don't know that the so-called security of life on the land is an illusion. They don't realize that if things go badly in the cities, life on the farms will go badly too.

Farm experts take a dim view of the future. Everything hinges, they say, on how prosperous the nation is as a whole. The key to the riddle isn't on the farms, but in the factories, the stores, the offices. The idea that the farms can be a refuge from disorder and job shortages in these places strikes them as silly.

The truth is that the American farm plant—the total of all the farms—has been shrinking for a long time. For example, today only one in six of all American workers is employed in agriculture, and that may drop to one in ten. Yet production on the farms is increasing enormously. No matter how heavy the demand for farm products, we won't particularly need more farms. We'll simply want to get more stuff off the acreage now under cultivation, or maybe off a little less. More acreage will not be needed, nor more workers.

Working farmers—not their families—totaled 8,300,000 in 1943. With newer techniques being constantly introduced, even fewer working farmers will be able to produce all the farm commodities the nation will need and also all that is likely to be exported.

It looks as though 8,000,000 workers could do the job. If this is so, about 300,000 workers (plus their families) could, and probably should, leave the land very soon. Thus, if 1,000,000 workers from the armed services and the war industries should go on the land in the next year or two, then the situation would indeed be "all fouled up."

However, the decline in the number of working farmers should not upset us. In fact, there is nothing to be gained from having a high percentage of the nation's workers dependent upon farming. Countries with the largest percentage of their people dependent upon agriculture are uniformly the worst off. An example of this can be seen in such countries as Rumania and Bulgaria and in China and India. Too large a proportion of the people dependent on agriculture is a bad thing for a nation that wants a high standard of living. Economic progress demands that people move out of agriculture into industry and the service occupations.

So if the needed quantity of farm produce can be obtained with fewer workers, that, too, is a national ad-

(*Continued on page 67*)

LAZYBONES

Don't believe all you see. Between writing lyrics, composing songs, and running a recording company, the guy's lazy like a cyclone.

There's a special knack in turning out hit tunes. How it's done and how well it pays off are exemplified in the career of Johnny Mercer, whose name you may not know but whose songs you surely do

BY ALYCE CANFIELD

SONG writer Johnny Mercer acts so much like an absent-minded professor that his intimates call him "the cloud boy." It's nothing for Johnny to board a train for New York with the car keys still in his pocket and have to mail them back to his wife in Hollywood. He regularly loses theater tickets or goes to one friend's house when he's supposed to be at another's. But all this doesn't mean he's nuts. He's just writing a song.

For Johnny picks up his ideas anywhere. He was waiting for a freight train to pass when the words —Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe— rattled into his head. While other drivers fussed over the delay, Johnny caught the rhythm of the words and filed them away in his memory book. When Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer asked him to do the lyrics for The Harvey Girls, he gave the title to tune writer Harry Warren. They wrote the song in thirty minutes. To date, Johnny has made $40,000 on it. For that kind of dough, say his friends, he can dream all he wants to.

Besides, Johnny is busy at many things. Not only is he a top lyric writer with such dillies as Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive, Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe, and Dream to his credit, but also he has written the songs for a score of pictures. Among them are Here Come the Waves and The Harvey Girls.

As a side line he is one third owner-president of the Capitol Record Company, whose take last year was more than $6,000,000. In addition, he sings. And despite his deprecatory remarks about his gravel voice and terrible vibrato, his recordings of both Atchison and Ac-cent-tchu-ate last year topped the record sales of the same songs as sung by America's No. 1 crooner, Bing Crosby.

Johnny's Chesterfield radio show in 1944 had a Hooper rating of 11. Not only did he sing on the show; he wrote most of the music, generally just before broadcast time. When Johnny found that with his picture commitments, radio was just too much, he gave up broadcasting to rest a little. His "resting" consisted of writing twenty songs for a New York stage show, St. Louis Woman, due to open soon.

He's written more than 500 songs, 300 of them published. "About half of everything I write goes into the waste-paper basket," he says of this. Of the 500, his favorite is invariably the last one he wrote. However, he has a more or less permanent fondness for Blues in the Night and another song—Nodaway Road—which was never a hit. He gets hundreds of fan letters from people who love his songs. Tangerine, That Old Black Magic, and Blues in the Night got as much fan mail as Van Johnson does today. Besides the songs, Johnny always writes the incidental music whenever he does a show.

When he gets bored with writing

lyrics, he composes music by picking out the tune on the piano with one finger. He can't read a note, but the songs to which he has written both the melodies and lyrics have landed on the Hit Parade just the same. Among them are Dream, You Grow Sweeter as the Years Go By, and those old favorites, I'm an Old Cowhand and Strip Polka. The latter's theme, "'Take it off!' cried the boys from the rear," was burlesqued from Maine to China.

This record of business man, song writer, singer, with mediums of radio, recordings, pictures, and pencil, suggest a sort of quadruple-threat man who is a human dynamo. On the contrary, mild-mannered thirty-six-year-old Johnny Mercer believes in taking life easy. "I more or less try to save up energy so if I have to work like hell, I can," he says. "I'm really pretty lazy."

Yeah, lazy like a cyclone.

BORN in Savannah, Georgia, with schooling at Woodbury Forest Preparatory School in Virginia, Johnny had no early ambition to become a song writer. But Johnny did want to go on the stage. Finally he reached New York as part of a little-theater group. Soon afterward he was an out-of-work actor. He applied for a job in the Garrick Gaieties. No actors were needed. "We only need girls and songs," he was told.

"Not being a girl," says Johnny, "I wrote a lyric to a melody I'd had for years."

The song was Out of Breath and Scared to Death. It served a triple purpose. It made a star of Sterling Holloway, who sang it; it introduced Johnny to pert dark-haired Ginger Meehan of the show's dancing cast, whom he married a year later, and it decided Johnny to become a song writer instead of an actor. He didn't get any advance on the song; he received thirty dollars a week while the show was running.

Being a song writer was rough sledding the first two or three years. Among the odd jobs Johnny took to keep eating was one on Wall Street as a runner. His first break came through Paul Whiteman, who has always been a hero to Johnny. Paul was auditioning for a vocalist. Johnny tried out and got the job. As featured vocalist, lean days were over, and when he wrote such songs as Here Come the British with a Bang, Bang and Goody, Goody, Whiteman plugged Johnny and Johnny's songs sky-high. Whiteman also introduced him to Hoagy Carmichael who had a tune called Snowball. In the verse was something about, "You're a little lazybones." Johnny spotted a good title, and his first great hit—Lazybones—was born.

Hoagy Carmichael, writer of the tune, throws credit for the song's success to the lyrics. "It might not be a hit today," says Hoagy, "but it was then, mainly because America has such a terrific sense of humor. There

(*Continued on page 61*)

LIBERTY PHOTOS BY O. F. HESS

Mercer songs are hits here, too. Amanda, six, rates her daddy ahead of Ezio Pinza.

Composer Mercer in a rare moment: he usually picks out his tunes with one finger.

Fledgling hostesses get a working knowledge of what makes a plane tick.

LIBERTY PHOTO BY O. F. HESS

Hostess in the Sky

Being an air-line stewardess isn't all glad-handing and chic uniforms. But they do meet—and sometimes marry—the most interesting people. Here's the dope on postwar prospects in one of the most glamorous jobs for career girls

BY WENDELL KNOWLES

IF you're a girl and want to fly while you work—this is the year to do something about it. The next twelve months will bring the greatest increase yet in the number of stewardesses in the air.

Air lines are rapidly recovering from war-restricted activity. They're readying huge Lockheed Constellations and Douglas DC-4s to span the continent and swing off for England and France, Japan and India. These big planes carry two stewardesses where one flew before. Besides, more flights will make still more jobs—and soon—for sky girls.

American Airlines needs 200 additional stewardesses by June. United is starting on a twenty-a-month hiring schedule. Northwest, TWA, Eastern—all intend to double their stewardess forces. The number hired this year alone will run into the thousands.

But before you dash off for the nearest air-line employment office you should know something about a stewardess' job. She can't just sit and look pretty until some handsome traveler proposes to her.

Primarily, her job is to make her guests comfortable and to see that they enjoy their trip. That sometimes takes a bit of doing. On an air liner the personal service performed by the stewardess includes about everything. If you want the latest newspaper, she'll produce it—ninety miles out of Minneapolis. Perhaps you'd like a quick snooze—she'll tilt your chair and tuck a soft pillow under your head. A glass of milk? A shave? A can of baby food for your six-month-old? You can have them all—at 8,000 feet.

It's this attention that makes air-line trips seem pleasant and glamorous to the passenger. But it isn't all glamor and high flying for the stewardess. Some companies call her a hostess, but no matter what you name her, she's still a busy girl in a size 14 uniform, and she works at all hours.

She has to be chef, guide, patient listener—and governess.

Gladys Carlson, for example. Gladys is a Northwest Airlines stewardess with trim lines and a refreshing smile who's just now greeting passengers bound for Chicago on the one-in-the-morning flight out of Minneapolis.

She stands at the plane's doorway welcoming each passenger, but she's already spent considerable time in preparation. She checked with flight control two hours before flight time, and arrived at the airport by midnight, an hour before take-off. There she met the rest of the crew, got her briefing from the pilots on the weather, estimated time of arrival, the altitude and air speed for tonight (the passengers always want to know). She picked up the name plates for the crew, got the list of passengers ("manifest" in air-line talk) from the ticket counter, and studied it for transfers to connecting flights and passengers who will require special care.

Ten minutes before flight time Gladys boarded her plane, slotted the name plates, checked her equipment, and gave a final flick of her powder puff. It's a couple of minutes before take-off now and she checks each of the twenty-one passengers, putting his seat number beside his name. She compares numbers with the transportation agent, takes the pouch containing the ship's papers up to the co-pilot, checks passengers' seat belts (Civic Aeronautics Regulation) on the way back to the rear, and then fastens her own seat belt. All this is done quickly but so easily that passengers get the impression of relaxing unhurriedness.

Once the plane rises into the darkness and the "Fasten Seat Belts" sign goes off, her job really begins.

Coats come first. Tag each one with the seat number and put them on hangers. Get newspapers or magazines for those who wish to read; pillows and blankets and paper slippers for those who want to sleep. Pass out chewing gum. Turn on individual lights. Adjust individual ventilators.

Tell G.I. in seat 7-left that the plane is cruising at 180 miles an hour at 7,000 feet. Get a deck of cards for two salesmen up front. Tell little old lady in single seat 3 the name of town twinkling below. Notice that mother in the front double seat is having trouble with curly-haired baby. Take out arm rest to give her more room, bring her a baby sheet, blankets, pillows. Ask about formula, promise to heat milk and bring baby food if baby gets hungry. Even baby smiles.

Gladys doesn't have a dinner to serve, since it's about 2 A. M., but she serves cookies and coffee or milk to everybody who's awake. Afterward, she talks to a sailor just back from the Pacific who wants to hear what a girl's voice sounds like again. Later she talks recipes with the old lady; lets the Army colonel from Fort Riley, Kansas, tell her about jumping horses; admires the pictures of a bank president's grandchildren, and brings stationery so a sergeant can write to his mother.

Ten minutes out of Chicago she returns the coats to the passengers and makes the final notations on her forms. The pilot brings the plane down. The stewardess says a smiling good-by to every passenger. She also smooths over any sour notes about the trip. "I'm sorry I couldn't let you smoke your cigar, Mr. Wiggins" (just cigarettes on board planes), or "Let me know you're coming next time, Mr. Martin, and we'll have apple pie for your snack lunch."

When the passengers are all off, the stewardess takes a last look to see that everything is in order, then takes out the name plates and heads for the stewardess' lounge. It's about 3.15 now, and she has until 5.45 to rest.

At 6.30 she's aboard her plane again, greeting passengers with the same welcoming smile. The route is different on the return trip. Instead of flying nonstop, they're landing at Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin, and Rochester, Minnesota. And there's a breakfast to be served between Madison and Rochester. On special trays, Gladys serves scrambled eggs and ham, a sweet roll and toast, cantaloupe, and either coffee or milk. Air-line meals are free. These meals, which are also served to the pilots, have evolved from the box-lunch era to the hot-dish meals of today. The food, prepared in commissary kitchens along the route, is kept hot aboard the plane in special vacuum containers. But it's still quite a trick to ready the trays and serve twenty-one passengers, especially if you have only thirty or forty minutes between stops to do it.

AFTER breakfast, the air liner comes down at Rochester where two Mayo Clinic patients are disembarking. A lot of patients fly into Rochester, many for emergency operations. They're all marked on the manifest and draw special attention from the stewardess.

By 9.55 the flight has ended at Minneapolis and Gladys is through for the day. Today she's going home to a well-earned rest. But it isn't always so. For example, one stewardess stayed at the airport five hours on her own time with a blind man, to make sure he got on his connecting plane. Another took a bewildered sheep rancher and his little son to the hospital in her own car to have an obstruction removed from the boy's throat.

Then there's the stewardess who wasn't content to let the passengers on a delayed flight shift for themselves at two o'clock in the morning. She wangled the keys to the locked restaurant and presided at a ham-and-egg-frying party. They all pitched in to do the dishes and left the restaurant as they found it. They all said it was the best flight they'd ever had.

There aren't any special cases for Gladys today, so it's home to sleep. Tonight she'll fly to Chicago again. Then two days off. Next month her run will change, and she hopes to get the Minneapolis- (*Continued on page 69*)

Beauty isn't the first consideration, but it does no harm.

A Link Trainer acquaints them with instrument flying.

Fires from Nowhere

Got a pile of old newspapers in your cellar? An oil mop in your hall closet? An old mattress in your attic? Then maybe your house will be one of the 20,000 to go up in smoke this year — for no apparent reason

BY PAUL W. KEARNEY

INTERNATIONAL PHOTO

IN Boston a prominent executive was wakened one night by a fire engine pumping near a shed behind his house. A blaze had started in a barrel of trash, originating in a discarded ham bag which had ignited spontaneously.

In Brooklyn a fire-insurance inspector was about to retire when he noticed a peculiar haze over his bed. Turning down the covers, he found the mattress too hot to touch in spots, so he dragged it out to the yard and doused it with water. Three more times that night it took fire from the inside and by the next noon was entirely consumed.

In Philadelphia, toward suppertime, a householder rubbed down the furniture with linseed oil and put the rags in a basement closet. Smelling smoke just after bedtime, the family investigated and found the entire closet ablaze.

In Milwaukee a lover of antiques was resurfacing the post of an old four-poster bed on the turning lathe in his basement workshop. The following night the pile of shavings on the floor near the bench took fire without the aid of any outside source of heat.

Spontaneous combustion is the answer to the mystery of these fires. And it is responsible for some 20,000 annual fires of proven origin, for twenty to fifty million dollars a year in property damages—for at least another twenty million dollars' worth of spoilage to hay and grain on the farm. Ranking second only to fires of electrical origin in dollar losses, spontaneous combustion and ignition destroy ships as well as haymows, factories as well as homes. The half-million-dollar blaze in the State Education Building at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; the million-dollar damage to the famous Riverside Church in New York City (both from painters' rags); the $750,000 loss on the coffee freighter, S. S. Pocone, resulting from ignition of soft coal in her bunkers, are just three outstanding examples.

Spontaneous heating is a complex phenomenon, still subject to much scientific disagreement. It is a concomitant of oxidation. In other words, it is the heat caused when a given substance combines with oxygen in the air. This combination often causes a temperature rise which may go so far as to become dangerous.

Iron rust is the most common example of spontaneous heating (although seldom recognized as such by the layman). The action of linseed oil on a painter's rag is the most notorious. In iron rusting, the oxidation is so slow that the resulting heat is dissipated unnoticed. In the oily rag, oxidation can be so fast that rags have repeatedly ignited in painters' pockets as they worked.

Other oils react slower, but almost any animal or vegetable oil or fat (mineral or petroleum oils are not dangerous) left on a combustible material will ignite of its own accord under proper conditions in periods ranging from a few hours to weeks or months. With just enough moisture present, just enough ventilation, just enough warmth and a reasonable freedom from disturbance, the chemical action of the oil brings a slight rise in temperature. This speeds up the oxidation, which in turn increases the pent-up heat to the combustion point.

That is the simple story of the greasy ham bag, the furniture-polishing cloths—even the insurance man's mattress, which probably had broken cotton seeds inside from which oil oozed onto the stuffing.

The same thing has happened many times with stacks of old newspapers in damp cellars (the printer's ink oxidized), with oil mops, with ac-

(*Continued on page 72*)

Silicones - Miracle Material

Not even the chemists can list all the things silicones can do and do well—and a year ago it would have been treason to list even a few. But now you'll find this miracle material in plenty of unexpected places

BY CHARLES A. SCARLOTT

ONE fall day in 1942 a Navy official in Washington, intending to relax, turned to a spy serial story in a magazine. Suddenly he grabbed the telephone and called the F.B.I. Something disclosed in that bit of fiction demanded the immediate attention of those charged with guarding closely held military secrets.

The sentences that had caught the Navy man's attention were these:

"The essential novelty of the new synthesis is the introduction of silicon atoms into synthetically prepared carbon atoms. The raw materials are therefore sand and coal. Silicon has the chemical power to enter into a carbon chain, and the resulting compound is a true metallo-organic substance. . . ."

These words in the story purported to be those in a memorandum of stolen information being sent to Nazi Germany. They seemed innocent enough to the casual reader. But the author was treading on ground dangerously near one of the Navy's prize secrets—silicones—one of the miracles of the chemical laboratory, a superb example of molecule engineering.

At Arctic temperatures, silicone rubber outdoes the real thing.

This synthetic material had numerous interesting uses, but what had fascinated military men—and had earned for the whole subject of silicones a high secrecy rating—was its ability to remain fluid in arctic cold. Certain members of the vast family of silicone materials do not stiffen or freeze at temperatures as low as 100 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. At these frigid temperatures the best ordinary greases and oils become more like January molasses than like lubricants. A lubricant that does not stiffen in the winter cold would be of greatest importance to the Allied cause. Silicones had been under intensive investigation because they seemed to offer the answer.

How the "leak" occurred does not matter now. It was not the handiwork of an enemy agent. The author was quite innocent of sabotage. The important fact is that silicone has proved useful as a lubricant for many devices, such as delicate instruments, that must operate in cold.

Furthermore, silicones work exceptionally well at high temperatures. They do not sludge or deteriorate at temperatures at which an ordinary grease catches fire. Silicones have surprising indifference to both heat and cold.

This trait of some members of the already huge and rapidly growing silicone family is useful in aviation. A plane may take off from the landing strip in the tropics where the thermometer in the sun may stand at 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and a few minutes later reach an altitude where the temperature is 65 degrees below zero. Radios, instruments, cameras, and other apparatus must operate perfectly over that extreme range of temperature. The fluid in the hydraulic-control systems must remain of constant viscosity regardless of temperature variation. No petroleum-base oil or grease will do so. But silicones will and do.

Silicones are not new. They had their beginning at the turn of this century because of the scientific curiosity of Professor Kipping of the University College of Nottingham, England. He was fascinated by the chemical similarity of carbon and silicon, the principal ingredient of common sand. Could he, perchance, make silicon compounds analogous to the enormous, famous family of hydrocarbons, of which sugar, alcohol, and gasoline are common examples? Could he, in short, replace the carbon atom in a hydrocarbon molecule with an atom of silicon? He was indeed able to do so—and spent the next forty years in his laboratory experimenting with such compounds.

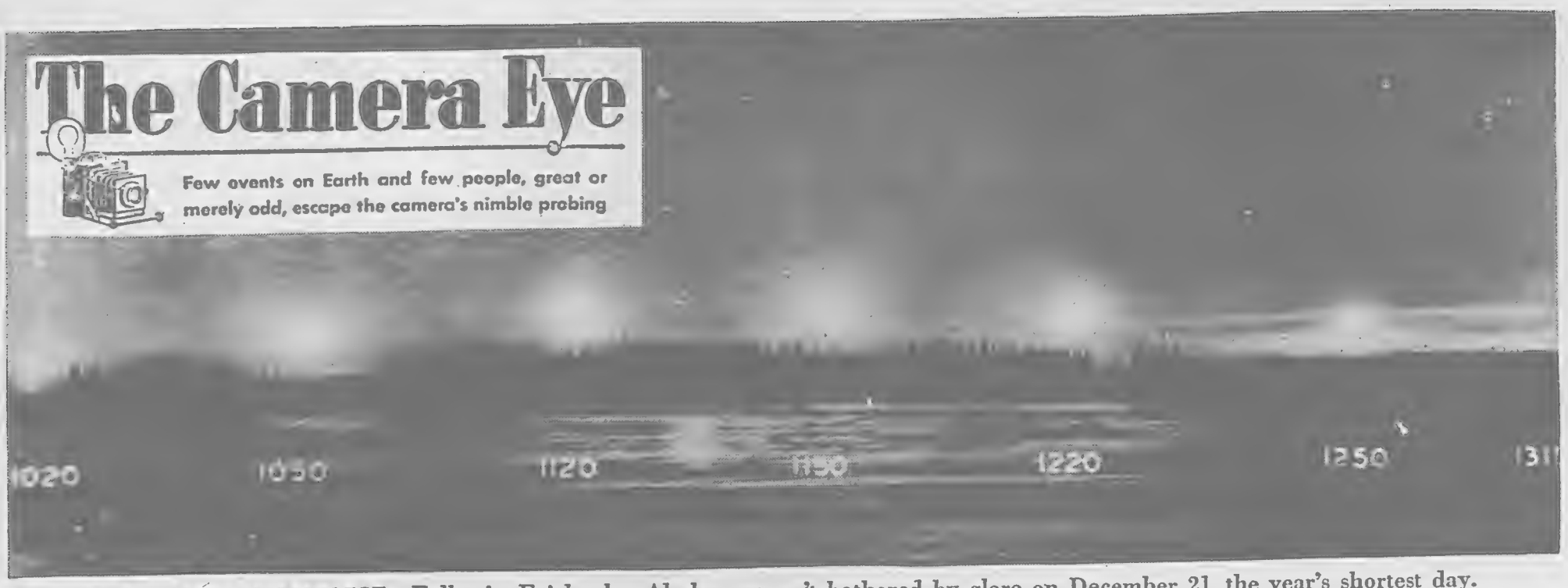
Professor Kipping had no practical objective. It was scientific research for science's sake. Although he succeeded in making many new substances with silicon atoms instead of carbon ones, and although they were similar in molecular structure, the chemical behavior of many of them was not as predicted. In many ways Kipping was disappointed in his chemical progeny.

For three decades this family of substances which Kipping had named silicones remained only scientific curiosities. Then, a few years

(*Continued on page 63*)

The Camera Eye

Few events on Earth and few people, great or merely odd, escape the camera's nimble probing



OLD SOL AT HIS FEEBLEST—Folks in Fairbanks, Alaska, weren't bothered by glare on December 21, the year's shortest day. These shots, made at half-hour intervals, show all the daylight there was—but imagine the luxury of a full night's sleep up there.
ACME

FOR THEM, LOOKING UP IS HABITUAL—Dr. Jean Piccard of the University of Minnesota faculty shows his wife a sketch of the balloon cluster he'll use on his next stratosphere flight. He's holding a new thermometer to record cold in empty space.
WIDE WORLD

CANINE COIFFURE—Harold Lloyd saw this hair-do on his leading lady, Frances Ramsden, and promptly tagged it a spaniel bob. Surely the pooch shouldn't object.
WIDE WORLD

SPOILAGE IS NO PROBLEM—Evicted in an argument over rent, Chicago grocer Charlie Mavis set up shop this way. That snow will refrigerate his soda pop nicely.
INTERNATIONAL

BROKEN HOME—AND HEART—Her custody was awarded to her dad in a Chicago court, but leaving her mother was a bitter wrench indeed.
ACME

HONEST, IT'S A HIGHWAY—It may look like a junk yard, but this free-for-all resulted when a wool-gathering motorist plowed into a truck transport in Kansas. It took cranes four hours to clean up the mess and restore the road to usefulness.
ACME

ANOTHER MARCH OF DIMES—The late John D. was the man who virtually made the dime famous. Here's his grandson, Nelson A. Rockefeller, making good use of one.
ACME

TO HORSE, MEN!—On strike from his work at an electric company factory in Kearny, N. J., horseman Dan Calton does his picketing from the top deck of his steed Flicker. Even the nag wears a tag.
INTERNATIONAL

DOWN-TO-EARTH MOTORING—Mr. and Mrs. Jerome A. Weiss of Euclid, Ohio, polio victims, do their shopping in this power-driven gadabout—but they dodge puddles.
ACME

It's one thing to slip into the Old Man's tuxedo, but quite another to measure up to it—and to him. Clothes may make the man all right,—but, to be sure, both clothes and man need

Liberty's SHORT SHORT STORY

The Woman's Touch

BY ALLEN RANKIN

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWELL DODD

"EVERYTHING'S going to be all right now," said Mama, "so quit your mooning and get ready. Everything's going to be fine."

"Yeah," I said, "But I—"

"But you nothing," she said, yanking the rumpled tuxedo suit from the hanger in my hands and slapping it onto the ironing board. "Quick now. Get into your shoes while I press these pants. You mustn't be late—not for a dinner party."

Mama was a bob-haired thin-faced little woman. Except for something which went deep and far back in her blue eyes, I think she would have looked like every other stoop-shouldered little working woman in our block in the West Forties. With just her weight Mama couldn't have pushed through a subway door, but with her eyes and a sort of quick light way with her hands, she could push away mountains—mountains of work down at McCullough's Hand Laundry—mountains of trouble anywhere. I know now that what she had was the woman's touch.

"You're going to look wonderful in a tuxedo," she informed me—"just like the Old Man did. Here, get a move on you now."

Her voice was gruff but with a gruffness we had understood together since the Old Man died. It was to keep from crying.

The velvet stripe in the pants caught the light and ran their length like a flash of quicksilver and she handed them to me and I put them on, doubtfully. They were baggy in the seat and much too big.

"We'll fix that," said Mama, and before I had a chance to say a word, she tucked out the fullness with two safety pins in the back. She looked around me in the mirror as she helped me on with the stiff shirt.

I wasn't feeling too good that night; I was feeling bad. I was just a dumb, skinny, board-chested kid with a pat of black hair slicked to my head. I wasn't thinking of what Mama had done without to give me things. I don't know what hard things I might have said if Mama hadn't kept the talk going just one way—her way.

"It's not the best tux in the world," she told me, "but it was good enough for the Old Man, and," she said, I knew this was to stir me and make me mad, "maybe you'll grow to it."

I watched her in silence in the mirror as she whipped the wing-tipped collar around my neck and slipped the bow tie under it.

"So Mary's coming with someone else." Her eyes caught mine. "That's the real trouble, isn't it? Not that they're having the party at Vic's Restaurant, but that she's coming with another fellow?"

I nodded dumbly.

"Bob Long?" she said.

I nodded.

"Well," she said, before I could get in a word, "you won out over him for the halfback place up at school last year, didn't you?"

"Yes," I said, "but this is different. It's—"

"It's no different at all," said Mama. "You beat him to the place on the team because you believed you could, didn't you?"

"Yes, Mama, but—"

"It's bad, I know, that the party's at Vic's place,' she said, "but it's just one of those things."

SHE looked at me sharply. "You love Mary, don't you? Well," sort of laying the law down to me now, "dinner party or no dinner party, you can have Mary."

The way she said it was definite, like the pronouncement of a judge.

"Pete," she said, "some men only look rougher in a tux. You're like the Old Man. You look smoother. You can wear a tux better than Bob Long ever can, understand? If I were a man and could wear a tux and not have it wear me—well, I'd be prouder of that than most anything."

"Mama," I said, "there are some things that—well—"

"There are some things that should mean a lot to every man," she said, talking on as if she hadn't heard me. "When a boy puts on his first tux and goes out—well—he should get a big kick out of it. It should be one of the most important nights in his life, no matter where he's going. He should walk down the street free, like he owns the town." She looked exploringly at me in the mirror. "Don't you really see what I mean, Pete?"

For some reason we both looked at the dark cold pane where the rain was beating. "It can be raining outside," she said, "but inside, when a boy goes out in his first tux, it should be spring.

"Pete." I could feel the desperation in her voice. "You've got to know what I mean."

"I do," I told her. "Of course I do."

AT first, going out into the rain on the stoop, I thought I had merely given her a kind of promise to humor her. But as I headed for the subway I began to realize she had given me something, too. She had given me the woman's touch.

I now look back twenty years and still feel the way she had patted the coat onto me, just so, and the way that touch had made the black bow tie feel, neat and dashing and tender against the winged collar.

I feel it in my heart, too, and I don't feel beaten any more. I haven't, in fact, since that night all those years ago. I remember how classy I looked in the tux. I felt classy.

I felt young and free and the lights jiggling by were my marbles and the world was my oyster, just as Mama wanted it to be—Mama, who worked at the laundry and hadn't had an evening dress all her life.

So it didn't matter when I walked into Vic's Restaurant to find my gang from school at the big table reserved for dinner parties, and Mary with Bob Long. Already I'd begun to feel proud in the Old Man's tux, prouder than any of the other kids with their new ones on. I'd begun to feel like somebody, and feeling that way I knew this wasn't the end, but just the beginning. I could still have Mary. I could even work up and own Vic's place one day.

So it didn't matter at all when I walked up to Mary and Bob with the first round of cocktails on the tray. It didn't even matter when Vic said, "You're doing all right, Pete, for your first night out. Some day you'll make as good a waiter as your Old Man."

I called out, "Eight medium well done and three rare." And stealing a glance in the mirror, I knew I was dressed to go places, and I knew I was on the way.

THE END

"It's not the best tux in the world," she said, "but it was good enough for the Old Man. Maybe you'll grow to it."

Hateful Romance

MORGAN picked up the German girl and carried her along a low stone wall toward a wooden gate. His leg was hurting him now, and he could feel warm blood spreading over his chest under the pressure of the girl's body. Unashamedly he hoped it was her blood, not his.

There was not a living person in sight. The country was thickly wooded here, and only two cottages, dark-windowed and gaunt, were visible.

Behind him, the jeep dripped rusty water from the riddled radiator. Private Smith, the driver, lay smashed beneath the steering wheel with three bullets from a machine pistol in his body.

As Morgan unlatched the gate his leg doubled and he nearly dropped the German girl. She wriggled as his arms tightened and he saw that her eyes were opened wide. They stared at him now, huge black pupils edged with blue, expressionless as stone.

At last he reached the house and kicked the door weakly with his bad leg. It opened so quickly that a waiting hand must have been gripping the knob. Morgan saw a white face, graying hair, a black dress swelling over a broad-bosomed, broad-hipped body. The woman stared at the girl and the blood.

"Elsa!" It was a scream without sound, a silent picture of a scream.

Morgan saw a couch near the fireplace and moved toward it. The fat woman clutched at the girl's body and he stumbled.

"Damn you," he muttered. "Keep your fat hands away!"

The woman understood the meaning, if not the words, and moved back.

Morgan tore the girl's dress away and found the wound. It had been her blood, all right. He opened his first-aid packet and placed the dressing expertly.

Then he turned his attention to himself. He pulled his trouser leg out of his boot and found that he had been drilled neatly through the calf of the leg. His knee was badly bruised and swelling painfully.

"Don't stand there!" Morgan yelled at the fat woman. "She's got the only dressing I had. Get me something!"

This time he had spoken in German, hard, blistering German.

Almost bowing, the woman turned and hurried toward the kitchen. Morgan doubled his fist and punched his leg two or three times as a counterirritant, and then lit a cigarette.

Elsa moaned a little. Morgan looked at her. Her face was pale and her unrouged lips were pale, but she was pretty as hell. With her soft light hair and her body lying so straight on the dark couch, he was reminded of the Idylls of the King—the body of a beautiful girl floating down a broad river on a black funeral barge. He thought of it bitterly. It was the memory of a beautiful thing and it had no place here.

The girl turned her head. "You speak German," she said slowly.

Morgan nodded. He punched his leg again. He had seen a lot of such flesh wounds and it was marvelous how quickly they healed—but they hurt.

"How is that?" It was Elsa.

"How is what?"

"That you speak German? Most American soldiers don't, not even with a book."

"Look," Morgan said. "You've got a great big bullet hole in you—made by a great big German bullet. If it doesn't hurt, it ought to. Just lie there and think about that."

"Did you ever live in Germany?" It was the girl again.

"No."

"Why did you take care of me?"

"Because Smitty was dead."

"I don't understand."

"If there had been anything I could do for Smitty, you'd be lying there yet." His voice was tired, exasperated.

"Even so, you still didn't have to help me. Why did you?"

"How the hell should I know?"

The woman came in. She was carrying a pan and a steaming kettle of water. Several clean, startlingly white cloths were over her arm.

"Aren't you going to get a doctor for her?" he asked the woman.

The woman shook her head. "There is no doctor in the town. Frau Ollendorf is coming. She is a nurse."

Morgan took the sulfa tablets from his packet and divided them equally, telling the woman to give one half of them to the girl, slowly, with plenty of water. Then he took the other half himself, one by one. He hadn't finished the tablets when Frau Ollendorf arrived. She spared Morgan just one glance of fear-diluted hatred and then turned to the girl.

"Frau Winter," she said, "Elsa must be moved to the bed."

When the door had closed behind them, Morgan forced himself to stand. His knee had stiffened and the bullet wound was aching like fury. He might hobble, but he couldn't walk.

Still, the jeep was insurance that he would be found soon. It was sure to be seen by any American vehicle that passed, and there would be an investigation and search of all the near-by houses.

Morgan looked at the black couch, and he felt very tired. He wanted to lie down and forget Germany and the pain in his leg. He wanted to go to sleep.

But he didn't lie down. Using his carbine as a staff, he hobbled outside, through the gate. It was nearly dark now. He approached the jeep cautiously. Smitty's body was still twisted behind the wheel, and the dead German youth was still sprawled where Morgan's grenade had blown him.

The radio was the important thing. Morgan knew it didn't work, but perhaps it could be made to work. Somehow he managed to carry it back to the house. There was no one in the parlor. He set the radio down and returned to the jeep. He laid Smitty on the grass and covered him with his own raincoat. Morgan hated to leave Smitty there, but the dead German was more important now. Morgan picked him up and staggered with him along the wall. Several times he stopped to

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"You German girls all expect us to be suckers for you. You want me to tell you that you're pretty. O.K. You are."

John's father had married a German lass while on occupation duty, and now here was John in love with an enemy girl. A strange tale of love and danger in a land where Cupid carries a grenade and blondes can be worse than bombs

BY JAMES R. WEBB

Sir Parsifal strove to move lightly. He stumbled and almost fell. The perspiration made his goodly suit of plate seem like a steam cabinet.

KNIGHTHOOD *Makes a Comeback*

When Percy crashed the country-club dance in a suit of armor, there were those who thought he had gone too far. Even Lisabeth, the slickest chick in the kingdom, recoiled from his advances—but knights are not easily put aside

BY ALLAN R. BOSWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY LAWRENCE BUTCHER

NOBODY else, of course, even suspected that the Model T was a spirited charger, or that it bore Sir Parsifal of Bracy, a brave knight and true. Nobody, that is, but Percy Bracy, eighteen years old and, since his return from school back East, dwelling blissfully in the Middle Ages. But then Percy always did overdo things.

His flivver—he called it his charger—was foaming at its radiator when he drew up at the depot express office. And Percy—that is, Sir Parsifal—entered the office and casually asked if his suit of armor had arrived. It was hot in the place and the flies were bad. Old Mr. Watson took off his glasses and wiped the steam from them.

"Suit of how's that again?" he inquired.

"Armor," repeated Sir Parsifal. "A suit of plate. It was worn by one of my ancestors—the First Earl. My uncle shipped it to me from England."

Mr. Watson squinted at Sir Parsifal and saw a tall and skinny lad with spectacles and a studious look. "By golly," he exclaimed, "I just now placed you! Percy Bracy. You sure have growed. I was askin' Lizzie Morton about you the other day, and she said you was still goin' to school back East. Engineerin'?"

Sir Parisfal frowned. His visor had been lifted, making him plain Percy again. He wished, too, that Mr. Watson wouldn't use the diminutive for Lisabeth—a sweeting, if ever damsel was. . . .

"No," he said. "English literature. The Medieval Poets and the Early Romantic Movement."

"H'm," said Mr. Watson, looking down his nose. Percy's father was an engineer, and wanted Percy to be one. "What good are them things?"

"What good?" Percy echoed so sharply his voice broke. "What good? Why, that was the most interesting period in all history! The Age of Chivalry, of Romance! I just wish I'd lived then, instead of now!"

"Well, maybe you wouldn't have knowed what you was missing," speculated Mr. Watson. "I guess you'd have been just as happy."

"Happier!" Percy said with conviction. "But that suit of armor, Mr. Watson. It ought to be here by now. And I want to wear it to the costume ball next week."

"Oh, it's here, all right," said Mr. Watson. "At least, there's a box that weighs somethin' less than a half ton, and there's twenty dollars and some odd due on it. Armor, eh? You want it loaded on that flivver?"

"I guess you'd better deliver it," Percy decided. "The emergency brake on my car doesn't hold. I'm going up right now to surprise Lisabeth, and you know that hill."

AT that very moment Percy's mother sat in the office of the family physician.

"Maybe," she went on, "he doesn't act that way outside the house—I haven't had a chance to observe. But it amounts to an obsession, Dr. Bost. He doesn't hear a thing you say—and then suddenly he comes out with the strangest words! And his letters home were unintelligible. Look at this one, for instance."

Dr. Bost examined the letter. "Why, it's written in Chaucerian English!" he exclaimed. "A rather good job, too, if I remember my own studies. Ah—that was an interesting period, Mrs. Bracy. 'A knight there was, and that a worthy man'—and how does the rest of it go? Something about truth and honor."

"I'm sure I don't know," Mrs. Bracy said impatiently. "But I know that when a boy hardly touches my lemon meringue pie, and says he'd rather have ale and a venison pasty, something's wrong!"

"How long has this—er—current interest been ruling him?"

"It started when he first went off to school, a year ago. My brother was stationed in England and apparently had time to poke around. He sent Percy some pictures of the Bracy ancestral home, and about that time Percy began studying the medieval period, and"—she coughed into her handkerchief—"he wrote me that he believed he is the reincarnation of the First Earl of Bracy."

"Hasn't he always been an imaginative sort," Dr. Bost asked, "and rather intense? It seems to me he was always wrapped up in his hobbies as a child. Pigeons once, wasn't it?"

"Oh, dear! We had pigeons all over the place!" confirmed Mrs. Bracy. "That passed when the neighbor's cat got two of his particular pets. Then Percy simply lived with a home chemistry set until we found him unconscious from a gas he had manufactured."

"Well—" the doctor began, "I wouldn't worry yet, if I were you, Mrs. Bracy. I should say this is just a new hobby for Percy—he'll play knight awhile, then find something else. At his age, it'll probably be a girl. Or is there one already?"

"There *was*," Mrs. Bracy said grimly. "And did he act normal and hurry right over to see her after being away a year? He did not. He fiddled around with some silliness about a suit of armor!"

After she had gone, Dr. Bost sat drumming fingers on his desk and keeping three callers waiting. To himself he said, "'That from the time he first began to—to riden out—he—' Now how the *devil* does that go?"

THE afternoon had turned cooler. A soft breeze came like a troubadour, making music in the trees, and dancing leaves played hide-and-seek with the sun. A thousand songbirds shouted that summer was made for love, and dwelt on the theme that nothing compared with the mere fact of being alive here and now. And yet, this was the day when what passes for Romance in our time turned its pallid face to the bright blue sky and died. Nobody was really to blame. It was simply that Percy had been born five hundred years too late. . . .

He became Sir Parsifal again immediately upon leaving the express office. The charger bore him in triumph across the greensward, through lists splendid with swords, past knights and ladies and men-at-arms who did him homage. He acknowledged their acclaim and pressed on.

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The first thing he saw was a disagreeable reminder that this is the Century of the Very Common Man.

Cone Out Spurring

I wanted to kill the old hypocrite. "Do you call that stuff you're feeding Woody 'How to lose your saddle in one easy lesson'?"

MAYBE the name of Ray Griffitts wouldn't mean anything to you; but if I said I was Woody Griffitts' pa, it might. It don't seem to matter how old a man is—if he's ever rode the rough string, the trumpets blow inside him and bubbles fizz along his veins when he sniffs that old arena dust. It had been thirty years, nearly, since I'd been in the arena; but I'll bet there wasn't a heart in town beat any faster than mine when Woody and I rode in that day.

I'd had Woody training hard all winter, though he didn't know it. But when you keep a kid out fourteen hours a day, hunting strays in the snow ridges, repairing fence, and working over a dozen broncs at a time, April is going to find him hard as bone.

It wasn't so much this local ropin' I had in mind as the big amateur show up at Alpine City next month. But the way I figure it, if a man can't carry off points in his own bailiwick, he'd better stay away from shows like Alpine City.

When we reached the bank, I told Woody to ride on down and look over the stock. "Not that any of these local goats can shake you up," I said; "but I've got to see John Morgan about something, anyway."

Only one clerk was on duty in the bank, but behind a windowed partition in the back I could see Morg bent over his desk. He waved to a chair when I went in.

"Lookin' spry, Ray," he said. "Woody riding today?"

"Just to show 'em how it's done," I said.

"No doubt," he said. Through the

They tensely watched their boys buck it out where years before Ray had lost out to Spence. This was a grudge ride all right, but nobody could guess whose son Spence was backing—and why

BY FRANK BONHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN

years he had acquired the talent of being sarcastic without losing his smile. He was a big loose-made man with a banker's hips. What hair he'd held onto was white, but those stiff black eyebrows of his gave him a fierce sort of look.

I told him what I wanted: five hundred to carry me till fall.

"Why, sure, Ray," Morg said. "You're always good for five hundred." His pen scratched a bit, and then he paused. "Shall I put down that Durham bull as collateral?"

I laughed. "You'd risk your hopes of heaven to get that bull, Morg," I told him. "But the only way you'll ever get a herd bull like Dusty John is to put out five thousand cash for him, like I did. Make it the usual pound of flesh."

He wrote out the check. Morgan ran cattle himself, as a side line—a hundred-thousand-dollar side line. He'd assembled the land on foreclosures and trades. He had a few good herd animals he'd acquired the same way. But he'd never get hold of Dusty John that way. I'd raised the value of my prime beef cattle five dollars a head with him, and his sons were going to help establish a Griffitts strain the buyers would remember.

"Spence Mulloy was in a while ago," he said. "Ray, that boy of his is bigger and harder than ever! I'd say Jim Mulloy just about had that show sewed up."

I knew he was putting the needle into me, but I had the loan now and I didn't care. "Maybe you'll see another youngster pull off some riding today, too. Not to mention up at Alpine City next month."

Morgan took his cigar out of his mouth. "You aren't letting Woody ride at Alpine, Ray!" he said. "Why, they—they'd slaughter him! It'd break the kid's heart to get eliminated the first day."

"It's possible," I said, "that Woody just might not let them eliminate him."

Morgan shrugged. "Woody just ain't championship timber, Ray. I don't say he can't outride most of the local boys, but, pshaw!— the Alpine show is just one rung below Pendleton and Cheyenne."

Then he smiled kind of pityingly. "You ain't forgot about the time you rode against Jim Mulloy's dad, have you, Ray?"

That did it. Dragging up a thirty-year-old defeat to throw in my face! I said, "Morgan, they're going to be tackin' a silver plate on a prize saddle up there next month, and the name on it will be Woodward T. Griffitts. And I'll back that brag up."

Morg leaned back and laughed. "I've heard a lot of men make big talk about their kids," he said, "but they usually back down when there's a few dollars on the line."

My face felt like a quarter of beef that's hung all winter in the icehouse. "I'm thinking," I said, "that you probably ain't half as sure Woody won't win that saddle as I am that he will. I'll bet you ain't sure enough to put up your Bennett place against Dusty John."

I never saw a man's eyes look so downright hungry. I knew then that he'd been torturing himself with the idea of owning that bull ever since I brought him to the valley. But I knew the idea of risking a dime to get him scared him, too. Then he brought his palm down hard and almost yelled, "*Done!* I'm being a fool, Griffitts, because that place is worth six thousand if it's worth payin' taxes on. But I'm going to teach you a lesson."

He wrote it up, legal. By the time I left he was beginning to quiet down, like a starving man who's just had a whopping meal. In his mind he already owned the critter. And I was just as pleased, because the Bennett place adjoined mine and I could sure use more room. It was in first-class shape. And now, maybe, it was going to be mine.

THE first time I realized I'd been jobbed was when I saw Woody ride that afternoon.

It was like watching a rider you'd never seen before. All the things I'd told him about working for points, making your contest swipes and then riding the gun out, you'd 'a' thought he'd never heard of. He rode like a drunken Yavapai, yelling and flapping his hat all over the arena. He got a great hand, but even after the show was over, I knew he'd come within a whisker of blowing a stirrup on that Outlaw bronc.

I sat there waiting for the judges to announce the results; and that was when I got to thinking about Morgan.

Morg hadn't been so dumb—not him! He'd made his bet with his pocketbook; but I'd made mine with my heart. No matter how good a rider is, he's about as safe to bet on as the weather. The breaks mean too much. So what I'd done was to bet a bull I couldn't afford to lose that my boy was the best amateur rider in California—which he was, but what if—well, what if any of a dozen things happened?

Morg knew men better than I know horses. He knew about that thirty-year grudge between me and Spence Mulloy. And he stood to make five thousand dollars by it. . . .

I reckon most of the Tamarack people have forgot about me and Spence Mulloy by now. A defeat is never so comical or tragic to anybody as it is to the man's who's got shook out of his saddle. Oh, I wasn't still grousing about what happened thirty-three years ago. It was over and done, and me and Spence were old-timers now.

Back there, Spence Mulloy was a wild-eyed buckaroo if there ever was one. You might not think it to look at him now. The years have taken the snap out of his spine. He's gray and hard-bit. But the day I rode against him at Alpine City there was nothing he wouldn't have rode that had hair on it.

I'm not saying he was a better bronc stomper than I was—just noisier. He could make a better ride on a corral fence than most men can on a bronc. I still say that silver-mounted saddle should have gone to me.

It didn't, though, and it kind of took the heart out of me to go on to the big shows, because I knew I'd never make a better ride than I did that day on Yellowjacket. Spence followed the buckers for a while. Made some money, too, but then he got married, and not many brides will set up housekeeping in a boxcar so their husbands can ride the bloody-nose circuit.

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The bronc slammed out of the chute, going up high, coming down hard.

Teamed Up for Better Taste

SOME like it rare . . . some like it well-done . . . but anybody will tell you a good steak tastes better after a Seagram's 5 Crown cocktail or highball.

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Good taste says "Seagram's 5 Crown, please!"... because Seagram's 5 Crown pleases good taste.

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Seagram's 5 Crown Blended Whiskey. 72½% Grain Neutral Spirits. 86.8 Proof. Seagram-Distillers Corporation, Chrysler Building, N[illegible]rk City

ANY NUMBER CAN PLAY

CHARLEY KING lived by the turn of a roulette wheel and a throw of the dice. His challenge to fate was always: "The limit's off, gentlemen!" This is the tense and dramatic story of one night in a gambler's life—a night that changed his whole existence.

BY EDWARD HARRIS HETH

ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS MAY

THE long night that was to come already hung in the air at six o'clock. In the corner of the big room the men playing rummy shuffled the cards with a sound of distant wind. They waited as they did each day between the afternoon horse-betting crowd and the nighttime crowd. They waited for the long hours ahead, for the rattle of chips, the soft roll of dice, the voices of the gamblers whispering to their money like men in love.

By six o'clock it was cold. But there were those in the gambling place—a few who lived there like Frieda, with [illegible] sleepy face, or the colored porter Sleigh—who had [illegible] even known of the heat. They hardly knew it was September outside, since they lived indoors night and day, not setting foot through the doorway except to meet the Chinaman who brought them their food. This was their home, the big place with the crap tables and wheels and stale smoke of last night's men.

Occasionally one of the men at the rummy table would glance up toward Frieda, lumbering in his carpet-slippered feet as he brought out the new decks of cards, still sealed in their cases, or the boxes of dice from the office; or toward Pete Senta, sitting alone on a stool near the bookies' cages, filing his perfect nails; or toward Sleigh, when he went to answer the knock on the thick metal door. But it was only the Chinaman at the door, bringing the tray of food for Frieda and Sleigh. The men playing cards watched the Chinaman and nodded with indifference to his grin.

"Where Mr. Charley?" the Chinaman asked.

Pete Senta looked up. The men shook their heads. No one knew where Charley was or why he had not come in all afternoon. Then the metal door gave a soft clang as Sleigh let the Chinaman out. The men began to grow

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tired of waiting, the tray of food reminding their stomachs of supper, and soon they began to leave—soon the big place was deserted, only Frieda and Sleigh left behind, lifting the bowls of chow mein and preserved figs from the tray to the white-topped poker table, moving quietly among the barred windows and the chuck-o-luck wheels and the stale smoke.

CHARLEY got off the train just as the clock in the depot tower was striking six. He went down the side street where he had parked his Cadillac before he took the train down to Chicago early that morning.

He was glad to be back. This was the city in which he had spent most of his life, the avenue, the department stores, theaters, the rivers rushing through the city, and in the distance the dead cupolas of the breweries, shut down by prohibition. It was a rich time, the late 1920s, and the city was rich with new building, wild with growth and spending. It was the wildness he liked, the spending

and winning and losing, and pulling the Cadillac away from the curb he thought how glad he was to be back, he might have been gone a year and was home again, on the streets he knew; it was that kind of feeling.

He could not decide where to go. He did not want to go to the gambling place, the big place that was his now, the kind he had wanted to run all his life. He wanted to go home. He wanted to be with Lon. But he could not face her—whatever it was between them, her docile acceptance or knowing what made him strong, knowing his needs, he still could not go to her now. He might give himself away. He knew he could not face Lon again until he was more used to it himself.

Lon was good. She must never be hurt by what he had learned in Chicago. Everything she did, she did for him. All through the years she had not complained, though her nights were like a widow's while he lived through the long nights downtown with chips and smoke and the whirring of cards.

Crossing the bridge, he parked the Cadillac and walked back to the river. He could not stop thinking of Lon, swearing again he would never let her know. Whatever came now, he must see alone to the end. The end itself would be enough bitterness for her.

Night after night she waited alone, afraid to sleep. When he came home in the morning she opened her eyes in awe—even after so many years, she was surprised to see him home safe. Only then could she sleep in peace; though an hour later she was up, dressing quietly, moving in silence out to the kitchen of the big white house he had bought for her. He wanted servants but she refused and tiptoed around her spotless large kitchen to fix breakfast for Paul, their son, before he left for the college downtown, content with her world, Charley and Paul and herself, while he slept exhaustedly in his own world of dice and losses and big killings. She was grateful just to have him home, and resting.

He stood on the bridge thinking these things about Lon, though he knew that at the gambling place they would be wondering what had become of him. The evening light, slanting over the city, dropped into the river. Several times he left the railing to start back to the car, glancing absently at the traffic over the bridge, but each time returned to look again into the tarnished water.

IN the big place, Frieda stacked the chow mein bowls on the tray. His name was Sol Friedman. They called him Frieda perhaps because of his flat matronly face, or his way of shuffling around in carpet slippers, like a woman trying to be comfortable. His body stuck out everywhere, over his belt, over his collar, over his shoes, but he was kindly and worked for Charley with a lazy patience.

Sleigh went up to his small room on the second floor to change his blue necktie for a green one and to put on a clean white jacket before the night crowd came in. He was a tall negro and proud of the snowy jackets he wore, proud to be working for someone like Charley and of having a friend like Frieda.

Sleigh returned downstairs and he and Frieda began to wait again, though they knew nothing of the long night ahead or how they would be looking at one another with the blank, puzzled faces of mutes in tomorrow's dawn. They kept waiting. For they knew that soon the night crowd would come in. The big place would be alive again with the rattle of chips and the slapping of cards, the smoke wreathing blue in the pyramids of light that dumped from the hanging lamps to the tables, drifting out to the darkness above, and the impatient faces, the cries from the poker table—"Raise! . . . well, razoo you, you louse . . . *raise again!* . . . a nine I want, come nine, nine, nine . . . oh a hell-raisin' deuce! . . . raise, razoo again, raise you! . . ." and the voice of the raker at the crap table—"Well, boys, will she come, will she won't? . . . there you are, *five's* the gentleman's number . . . will she do, will she don't? . . . there you are, the gentleman fades . . . *next man's dice if you please!* . . . " and Pete Senta's young voice sly and glib at the roulette wheel, and the blackjack games and the table stakes games, and the crinkling of paper bills, the clink of coin, and the hunched shoulders of the men sitting at the poker tables.

Around seven o'clock Pete Senta came back from supper.

"Hasn't anybody seen Charley?" Pete asked.

"Nobody saw Charley," Sleigh said.

"Why hasn't anybody seen him?" Pete asked. "It's seven o'clock."

"Nobody saw him because he wasn't around," Frieda said.

"He wasn't here," Sleigh said. "He didn't come around all day."

"I telephoned his house but he wasn't there," Pete said. "I hope I didn't scare Lon, because she didn't know either where he was."

"That Charley," Sleigh said, "he'll kill you if you scared Mrs. Charley."

"Lon said he was down here at the place. She said he left around noon like always."

"That Charley's going to kill you for scaring Mrs. Charley," Sleigh said.

"I didn't scare her," Pete said. "I only asked where he was."

"He wasn't here," Frieda said. "I didn't see him all day."

"He's playing golf," Sleigh said happily. "He and Titanic, they went to play golf."

"Charley's never played golf in the afternoon all his life," Pete said. "He only plays in the early morning after work. Before he sleeps."

"You shouldn't have scared Lon," Frieda said. "Now she'll keep worrying."

"I didn't scare her!" Pete said, and looked ready to cry. It worried him that he might have scared Lon, because he knew how Charley treated her like something sacred and far above all of them. Pete was young, less than twenty-five. Like all the others he loved Charley. All the gamblers, though they did not know what it was, loved Charley as something honorable and decent and

right, though they did not know it in words. He was something better.

Frieda went to take the green felt cover from the roulette wheel and brought out the ivory roulette balls and croupier's rake from the office. Pete followed him.

"I wish I knew where Charley was, that's all," Pete said. He poked his fingers into his pack of cigarettes, dropping it to the floor when he found it empty.

Sleigh quickly picked up the empty cigarette pack, tearing off the coupon and putting it in his jacket pocket. He always saved the coupons for Frieda, who collected them. "He's gone fishing," Sleigh said, beginning to laugh. It pleased him to think of Charley fishing. "Wait till he brings back them big ones."

"He didn't go fishing," Frieda said, shuffling comfortably out to the roulette wheel with the croupier's rake in his hand.

"He didn't go fishing," Pete said, "but I'd like to know where he went."

Sleigh looked hurt because they didn't think he had gone fishing.

"You'll find out where he went when he hears how you scared Lon," Frieda said.

"I wouldn't have scared her for anything," Pete scowled. "Charley knows that."

Little by little the place was growing alive as Frieda uncovered the tables and wheels, switching on all of the green-shaded lights and wiping the croupier's rake with his soiled handkerchief. Pete lit a cigarette and stood looking into the electric fan.

"I wonder where Charley is," he said. He threw his cigarette to the floor. "It bothers me."

WHEN the telephone rang at the big place, Pete Senta and Frieda and Sleigh looked at one another to see who would answer it. At last Sleigh went into the small office. He was back in a moment and what he said made Pete rush into the office.

Frieda had a bag of litchi nuts that the Chinaman had brought along with the supper tray. He chewed thoughtfully and tried to listen to Pete on the phone—all of them, when it rang, thought it might be Charley. It was seven-thirty. Any moment the night crowd would start coming in, but Charley was not yet back.

But it was not Charley. Pete felt the heavy telephone grow moist in his hand. He kept nodding into the phone, as though he could be seen. It was the desk sergeant from the station calling.

"But he ain't here," Frieda heard Pete say again and again. "If I knew where he was, I could tell you. Nobody saw him all day."

Pete listened to the slow, unemotional, law-enforcing voice of the sergeant.

"But we ain't seen him," Pete kept saying. "Nobody saw him, not even his wife."

When he returned to the room Sleigh was waiting beside Frieda, waiting for him to finish eating the nuts so he could sweep the thin, fragile shells from the floor.

"That was the desk sergeant at the station," Pete said. "Harmon. He wants Charley to call him, the minute he gets to the club."

"He wants some more booze," Frieda said. "Another case."

"No," Pete said. "He says it's important."

"That's important," Frieda said. "You don't think a case of booze is important?"

Pete shook his head. "No, it was something else, something important. Charley shouldn't forget," he said. "I should tell him the minute he comes to the club. He's got to call Sergeant Harmon right away."

Sleigh was still picking up the shells of the litchi nuts from the floor when the first of the nighttime crowd began to come in. Pete Senta saw them coming in and hurried over to Frieda.

His black eyebrows were raised and his face went white with worry. "Now what'll I do?" he whispered. "The crowd's coming in and Charley's not here!"

"I don't know where he is," Frieda said, lazily studying a fragment of nut. "If I knew, I'd tell you."

Frieda looked up and saw Pete across the room, brushing his hand over his sleek oily hair and going up to greet the customers who had just come in. He waited until Sleigh took their hats and then led them into the roulette room, the way Charley would do, talking to them and leading them into the ornate room with the marble fireplace at each end and gilt cornices around the ceiling, the room that used to be Sarah's reception room when Sarah Johnston owned the place, when it was one of the biggest and finest houses in the country with all the girls in Paris dresses and all the men either rich lumbermen or meat packers or famous people like ballplayers.

It was the big room where the rich gambled. There was a rosewood roulette wheel and heavy drapes over the blind windows and expensive chairs to sit on. Pete hated the rich, who did not know how to gamble, who gambled without love, pinching their pennies; he hated them even though Charley kept telling him that was how they got rich, by pinching their pennies. But they did not know how to gamble. They talked the wrong way, without fright or passion, while the ball spun and struck and clack-clacked in the grooves of the wheel. They played like dead men clustered around the table. Pete hated the rich because they were rich and he was not and because he was a gambler and they were not. And because the daughters of the rich were beautiful, and because the rich daughters would never look at a gambler like Pete except to buy more chips or to collect their winnings.

There was only one of the rich whom he liked, the brewer, J. Walter Kersten, one of the first of the night crowd to come in that evening, bringing with him not another rich man, but his barber, a small man named Joe Joseph. They were friends, the rich brewer and his barber, one of the secret lonely friendships that form between men in gambling places or at ball games. It was all right, Pete thought; it made Kersten good. Kersten was also friends with Charley. That was all right. It would be all right in the world if all the rich men made good friends with their barbers instead of with other rich men, Pete thought.

Sleigh went out to the pantry to get glasses and whisky, good prewar whisky, and ice for Mr. J. Walter Kersten. The customers in the wheel room always got drinks set up free, the way it was done in the movies, the men with their women moving around the roulette table in expensive clothes, holding highballs in their hands.

Next to the sink in the pantry was a little window that Sleigh opened an inch to let in some air. He could see nothing through the window, because it was boarded over outside, but through the narrow slits between the boards he could see it had grown dark outside, a black blowing night, and still Charley was nowhere around. A little breeze pushed through the slits, cool, smoky with fall. Hey Charley, Sleigh thought, reminded by the burnt smell of the air, when are we going fishing? How many years you promise now: You bet your life, Sleigh, one of these days we'll take a week off and go up north in the woods for a little fishing?

SLEIGH put the drinks carefully on a tin tray and carried them in to J. Walter Kersten and his friend Joe Joseph. Shortly after, Charley's brother Rob came in. No one particularly liked him and so no one noticed or spoke to him. He was as tall as Charley but thinner, with a way of letting his lower lip drop when he laughed.

He started toward the room in the back where the crap table was. Rob ran the crap game. He was not a good gambler and could not be trusted, stealing out of the cashbox each night while he raked. Charley figured he stole maybe a thousand a year—not much, but that again was like Rob. He stole in dribbles; he couldn't even steal big. Charley let him keep on working because they were brothers. It was hard to think of him as Charley's brother. They all knew how he stole from Charley. There was always a circle of emptiness around Rob as the men avoided him—he was like a doomed man that no one wanted to touch.

There was no one in the crap room. Rob took out the dice and flung a trial roll down the table—the dice hit with a hard dull thud against the board. He flinched at the sound. His pale hands were trembling. The cones of light falling from the lamps lit up the bright green sea

of the crap table. The bright light in the empty room made Rob seem a lonely man, but he would never have known it since he was used to being always alone.

His eyes shifted wildly across the table and the betting numbers painted on its green felt top. He was trembling, and mopped his chin with his handkerchief. He looked scared to death about something. He laughed suddenly, an ugly, nervous spurt of laughter.

"Well, I'm ready," Rob said to no one.

THE crowd was coming and kept Sleigh busy unlocking the door. He let no one in unless he was sure it was someone that Charley knew or would want in the place. But the customers that he recognized, he let in gladly. The place was filling up. Pete Senta came from the front room where the rich men played roulette, the look of worry in his black eyes because the place was growing so crowded. He went to look for Frieda.

"Where's Charley?" he asked. "It's after eight."

Frieda shrugged. "Nobody's seen him yet."

"I can't figure out where he'd be," Pete said. "I can't see why he'd stay away all day and not even tell Lon where he was."

Just then Sleigh opened the metal door again and Charley came in. Sleigh was laughing, pleased to see Charley. Pete saw the tired pouches under Charley's eyes and the deep-cut lines beside them that he had not noticed before.

"Charley, where were you?" Pete asked. He followed Charley toward the office.

For a moment Charley looked at Pete. He was about to tell him something. But he stopped.

"I wasn't anywhere," he said.

THE new thing about Charley that night, they all thought, was the silence about him. Wherever he had been all day, he did not tell them. The place kept growing more crowded, the rich paunchy men filling the roulette room and the hopeful poor men with their week's salary in their pockets clustered around the crap table in back. The smoke hung suspended from room to room, curling through the bristling stillness of men who are gambling, of men who look tense, pale, sick, like men being tried for their lives, who know they are doomed yet hold hope flickering in their eyes.

Sleigh was happy, carrying highball glasses back and forth from the roulette room. Joe Joseph the barber, nervously putting fifty cents on a number, had won eighteen dollars and his soft unbelieving laughter as he collected the chips from Pete Senta made all men glad he had won.

Sleigh looked into the office to tell Charley about the barber's shy joy at winning the eighteen dollars. Charley laughed, taking a highball from Sleigh's tray.

"You don't look so good," Sleigh said. "You want to be careful. You got the sick look on your face."

Charley turned to him with a look of surprise, his dark eyebrows twisting upward. Sleigh saw the look of sleep that had come in his eyes and mouth and fingers, and even hung in his tired laugh. "You don't look good to me," Sleigh said. "You get some rest." He began to look happy. "You close up this place for a while."

"Close up the place?" Charley laughed.

"We go up to them lakes up north," Sleigh grinned. "We catch them big sonofaguns."

"Sure, we'll just close up and go fishing," Charley said, but wishing he could.

"Up north," Sleigh said, "all those big babies are waiting. I won't rock the boat."

"I'll just close up," Charley said.

Sleigh wiped his forehead. "Just lock the door and off we go, but we got to take Frieda along!"

"Sure," Charley said. But he would have liked it.

"This is good fishing weather, I bet," Sleigh said.

"It's good fishing weather, you bet your life."

Charley got up and went to the window. He stared through the pane. He could see where there was nothing to see, the rattling pines and icy-gray waves licking among the bulrushes.

"You couldn't find better weather. You're right, Sleigh," he said. "By God, it would be something."

"If we go up north fishing," Sleigh promised, "then you'll feel better. You'll come back without that look on your face."

Charley turned and shook his head. "No fishing," he said. But seeing the look on Sleigh's face, he took out his pack of cigarettes and tore off the coupon to give it to Sleigh. "You'd better see the folks out there are all getting drinks," he said, handing him the coupon, and like a child Sleigh obeyed him, happy just to do what Charley told him. He left the office and as he opened the door there was the sound of chips rattling, the clink of silver dollars, the hushful hopeful cries of the poker players and the rush of the ivory ball around the roulette wheel. The big place was awake.

Charley dropped his head on his arms, listening to the sounds from the rooms outside. He kept thinking of all the money he was making and how all his life he had driven himself to the place where he was now, running the big gambling place. He drove a big Cadillac, there was a car for Lon and a roadster for Paul when he started college a few weeks ago.

He was always surprised at how much money he was making now. He did not know what to do with it all but still could not give up the thirst for it. He spent it furiously, returned large sums to men who had lost it gambling in his place, especially to young men, the still-frightened ones who did not gamble well—he did not enjoy winning unless he won with fever and skill. He paid big bonuses every Saturday night to Frieda and Sleigh and Titanic and Pete, he bought expensive suits and neckties and shoes and lavished money on Paul and Lon, who did not know what to do with it. He had reached the place he had known all his life he would some day reach. He was rich and mighty. But as he watched himself grow richer he felt empty and cheated.

If he hadn't gone down to Chicago that afternoon, he kept thinking. If he had not learned what he knew now. Nothing became real until you heard it in words. He had picked a doctor in Chicago because he was less known there. He did not want anyone to know—whatever he was going to learn, knowing in advance what it was, he wanted to hear by himself. He never wanted Lon to know or worry. As he listened to the doctor a sweat broke out on his temples. It was not that what the doctor was saying was unexpected but that he was saying aloud what Charley had known for months he would hear.

A change, a long vacation, the sun in Florida perhaps, an end of work or worry or better still, several months in a hospital, the doctor said—but even with these words a doubt hung in his voice, a lack of conviction. He said without saying it that even these would really never help, nothing could really help, there was this day, you see, coming up on the calendar, this day of this month. . . . But Charley knew he would never go to any hospital and would never rest, that stopping work would be stopping life itself before that unspoken day arrived. He had no choice.

A GUST of wind blew against the boarded window of the office. It had a cold sound. It made him think of Florida. Some of the customers who came into the place to gamble in the roulette room often went to Florida in the winter. He knew how easily he could afford a long winter in Florida. He began to think of the fishing down there, the stories he had heard the rich customers tell. Lon would like the walks on the beach and the coconut trees; Paul would like the expensive hotels, all the well-dressed women and men.

He saw the green swells of the water tipping the boat almost straight upward, the swooping white clouds dropping below his eye level, the waves trying to knock the boat apart until another blue-green swell rose up, a lip of foam on its crest—he ducked, shielding his head with arms and laughing curtly.

He felt foolish, sitting in his office with one arm thrown crooked over his head, his body arched sidewise to escape the spray. He got up to go to the roulette room, rubbing his eyes, to find some of the men like J. Walter Kersten who went down to Florida for the winters, and talk to them. And as he opened the door he heard again the hushed, whispering sounds of cards sliding against one

another, the cries of poker players, the hunted shouts of "Raise . . . why, then raise you, you ——! . . ." the plopping of the roulette ball and the gratey drone of his brother Rob at the crap table.

He was growing richer every minute.

PETE SENTA remembered that Charley was supposed to call Sergeant Harmon the minute he got in. He handed the croupier's rake to Frieda and met Charley just as he was leaving the office.

"I shouldn't forget to tell you," Pete said. "You've got to call Harmon right away. Up at the station. I was supposed to tell you the minute you came in."

"Harmon?" Charley asked.

"Sergeant Harmon," Pete repeated, looking worried.

Charley liked having Pete near him. He was a gambler, Charley knew, the right kind, who understood the hard lonely talk that was made around a poker or crap table. He had it in his blood and eyes and fingertips the way Charley had it in his. No one could trip him, no one could make him flinch. He played a steady, nerveless game.

There was always a look about him, that he would someday die with a knife in his heart or drown at sea.

Remembering the doctor in Chicago, Charley wanted to put an arm around Pete. But he kept his hands dug in his pockets. For it was wishing that his own son were like Pete that had made him want to put his hand on his shoulder; Pete was his son, not Paul. It was Pete who went fishing or bowling or to play billiards with him, and not Paul. They agreed about many things, argued about many things, but with Paul there was nothing to talk about. He tried and sometimes Paul tried but their eyes would not meet, and the poker hand Charley was trying to explain about never got played, the fish wasn't reeled in, the joke the boys at the club played on Titanic, who worked for Charley, never was told about.

It was Pete who copied his way of dressing and the slant of his hat. Pete was always asking advice about women. He talked about and got in trouble with and loved and cursed women, and came running to Charley to ask didn't women give him a pain, so that Charley would chuckle, saying that there was at least one who didn't, Lon didn't. Pete looked grave and said Oh, sure Lon don't.

Ada Simpson didn't either, he said on reflection. He knew Ada was a good friend of Charley's.

That was Pete. Charley took his hands from his pockets and began to wonder about Sergeant Harmon.

"He said you should call him," Pete said, "the minute you came into the place. Frieda says he wants some more booze."

"He got a case last week," Charley said.

"It means trouble," Pete worried. "I don't like that Harmon. I'll bet a buck he's going to start trouble."

"Harmon's all right. You worry too much."

"What do you suppose he wants? You better call, right away."

"Don't worry about Harmon," Charley said. "He won't start anything."

"Oh, sure. Harmon's all right." But Pete frowned.

"Maybe they drank that whole case," Charley said. All at once he felt a need for haste. The night had begun, the place was crowded and suddenly he had so much to do, as though all the things for the rest of his life had to be finished tonight. "I'll call Harmon," he said to Pete. "Right away. You better get back to the wheel."

Charley returned to the office, closing the door behind him.

Sergeant Harmon had a muffled kindly voice. "Charley?" he said, and sounded surprised. "Oh, Charley."

"Charley King," Charley said.

"Sure. I know," Harmon said. "Well, how's Charley?"

"I'm fine," Charley said.

"They're keeping you busy, I'll bet," Harmon said.

All at once Charley felt sleepy. He waited to hear what favor Harmon wanted now, more booze or money or a tip on the horses. "They're keeping me busy. What's on your mind?"

"I hate to mention this, Charley."

"Go right ahead. You boys up there run out of hooch?"

Harmon laughed. "We can always use more of that."

"I guess I can send up another case," Charley said.

"Oh, don't bother if you're short," Harmon said, and the voice grew fainter again, muffled and lost. "I hate to mention this, Charley, but I'm afraid I got to raid you tonight."

He hadn't been raided since he opened the big place. "Tonight?"

"Tonight's a good time," Harmon said. "You can tell me what time to send the boys down. They won't break nothing up."

Charley's voice sounded raw. "What do you want to pull a raid on me for?"

"Well," Harmon said. "It'll look a little better. We've been getting some complaints."

"You're always getting complaints," Charley said. "I don't get it."

"Well, these are tough ones," Harmon said. "They've

got this new vice commission behind 'em, that's screwing things up."

"I don't get it," Charley repeated, because there was something Harmon wasn't telling him.

"I wouldn't do it if it wouldn't look better," Harmon said. "I hope it don't make you sore."

"Oh no," Charley said, and thought of the hush money he was paying Harmon. "Do you have to take me along too?"

"It'll look better if we pull you in too," Harmon said, his voice muffled again. "But don't think we got a grudge against you. No hard feelings."

"Oh no," Charley said, "no hard feelings."

But he stopped listening as Harmon went on apologizing, because he was thinking instead of Paul, new in college now, and how the story and names would be in the paper, with his picture maybe. He had not minded the raids and fines in the old place years ago, before he could pay big hush money, or his name in the paper except for Lon, who always pretended she had not seen the papers until he himself mentioned it. But Paul was suddenly grown-up now, and had become not just Charley's son but a gambler's son; a secret he angrily and tensely guarded.

He interrupted Harmon. His voice went hard, sharp with the dryness inside his mouth. "Tonight's not such a good night, Harmon."

"Don't get sore," Harmon said. "Maybe some night next week suits you better."

He thought quickly. "Monday, that's a slow night. Your wagons won't be so crowded."

"How many wagons should I send?"

"About four should be enough," Charley answered, thinking that for a while at least Paul was safe, for a while the wall that was growing between them would pile no higher; until Monday, at least, he would not lose him.

THE two strangers came in around eleven o'clock that evening. When Sleigh lifted the cover of the peephole they said they were friends of someone named Stothart from Wausau, who often dropped in after football or baseball games. He thought he recollected someone named Stothart and let them in. They were plainly dressed, with a quiet nervousness about them like men with money in their pockets but not particularly used to gambling.

The men went to the crap room in back. They did not talk to anybody or seem to know anyone. He was sure he remembered someone named Stothart, Sleigh thought, when a cigarette coupon on the floor caught his eye and he stooped to pick it up. Then he found the faintest shadow of grime on his snowy jacket and took out his handkerchief, wetting it, rubbing hard to wipe the spot away before Charley saw it. Charley'd get sore at him with a dirty jacket.

Having Charley sore was something Sleigh could not imagine even in dreams. It was why he could not go into Charley's office to ask about letting the strangers in. He would not dare to take the chance of bothering him, since he knew Charley was busy with Ada Simpson.

ADA did not mind that he knew she was in love with him, because almost everyone had known it for years. When he took her into his office to have a drink she saw the looks Pete Senta gave her, and then Frieda. She saw the thirsty look Charley's brother Rob gave her. But she did not mind.

She took a cigarette and leaned against the desk while he lit it. Then she tipped her head back, her eyes narrowed to escape the smoke, while she unrolled one of her stockings and rolled it again tightly in place just below her knee. She looked down to make sure the seam was straight.

Charley was unlocking one of the desk drawers, his dark head bent down. He brought out a bottle of whiskey, even better than the prewar whiskey he served the wheel-room customers. He poured out two straight drinks. He gave one glass to her.

"Glad you dropped around," Charley said. He smiled slowly. "Bumps."

"Bumps," Ada said.

She looked good to Charley. She had grown too thin and used too much rouge, but she still looked good. She looked like the kind of a girl a gambler would have married instead of Lon. But all Charley could feel in spite of those nights five or six years ago was a little sorry for Ada.

She had been one of Sarah Johnston's girls, when Sarah ran her house here where the gambling place was now. After Sarah closed the house Ada went to live with her, like Sarah's own daughter. Ada even called Sarah Mother now and went shopping for her and saw that she ate the right foods and went to the Grotto or came to Charley's with her when Sarah wanted to go out some place and often sat up all night with her, reminiscing about the times they used to have.

Sarah and Ada had come into the big place about ten-thirty, and Sarah, over seventy now, had gone into the roulette room that used to be her own reception room. She liked to gamble, to have something to fill her time, losing huge sums to Charley and breaking into high chattering laughter, a hundred wrinkles coming to her tiny face—there was nothing else to do with all the money she had made and she was glad to lose it to Charley.

Ada had a reason for bringing Sarah to Charley's that night. The Filipino chauffeur, who used to be Sarah's porter, drove them up and as soon as Sarah was in the wheel room, Ada went to look for Charley. She found him in the back room, holding up the crap game while he measured the dice with a pair of calipers. He often went back to measure the dice, to let the customers know that his place was on the level. Then he took Ada back to his office.

She drank her shot in one gulp. She puffed on her cigarette. "I saw your friend last night at the Grotto."

"What friend?" Charley asked.

"Rosnik."

He began to laugh. Years ago he had caught Rosnik cheating in a nickel-limit game. He had never liked him since. "He's been coming around lately. He's dropped a few thousand dollars in the last couple of weeks."

Ada hugged her thin shoulders. "Out at the Grotto last night," she said, "he was crying because you're taking all his dough. You better go easy."

"I'd like to bleed him broke. Guys like that, no one even wants to spit on."

But it made Charley laugh. He enjoyed beating Rosnik, because he played crooked. Ada took out a small vial of perfume from her purse and put little dabs of it behind her ears. "You better go easy," Ada said, "you got enough dough." She held out her glass. It's a long time between drinks, she was going to say, but then didn't say it, glancing up at Charley. He looked as lean and hard as he had looked years ago. He always seemed to be running, the way his hands and feet could not be still. She watched him for a moment. A thin edge of color crept up her cheeks. She looked as though she knew she ought to give up but did not want to. Still, she couldn't get sore at Charley, knowing how he felt about Lon. She'd never met Lon and never wanted to; it was better that way. She didn't like looking over fences. It was useless anyway.

She jabbed out her cigarette and held out her glass to him. She wanted to say Hell, you can at least give me a drink, but said instead, "You go easy on Rosnik. He cries too much." Suddenly he had stopped laughing because of the way she was looking at him, a way that could not mean anything to him any longer and did not even remind him, except dimly, of those nights five or six years

ago. All that reminded him of it and made him glance up, smiling faintly, was her perfume as it reached his nostrils. It wasn't his fault, she admitted that much. At least they were damned good friends. "Oh God, what a gag," she said aloud, slipping down from the desk and putting her high heels firm on the floor.

The wind shook the boards across the windows. Charley was laughing but there was fright in his voice. He remembered wondering why Ada was standing there; it was not tonight, it was this afternoon in the doctor's office in Chicago and she had no right to be standing there. So far he had been able to hold himself together. But then a wave of panic pounded against him, so that his throat felt hollow; Lon, Paul, the succession of gambling places he had run, his whole life, welled before his eyes and made the burning pain. It was the damnedest thing, he thought, the sight of a grown man bawling, his hand over his face, and the grown man, here in his office, was himself.

All of a sudden he was nothing, he was helpless. He pressed his fingers against his eyeballs; he did not want to die. It was losing in some monstrous poker game—a staggering loss, the kind he had never dreamed of before. It was the highest stake of all. He felt broken the way men must feel when they are handed life sentences.

Ada was staring at him, her eyes big with fear. It was a bad thing to see. "What's the matter, what got into you?" she asked. Then she took his lowered head in her arms. She could touch him again, not knowing the deal of the cards that had once more given her the chance. "Are you all right now?" she asked. He nodded, his head pressed close against her breast. She did not ask him again what was the matter. She was afraid. It was enough, having her arms around him. She went a little paler. But it was also the happiest she had been in years.

THE place had filled up.

The men cursed and hoped around the poker and crap tables, their faces pallid under the bright swinging light, their damp fingers crooked with waiting to reach for the chips, their bodies hunched forward until they shifted restlessly; around the blackjack table the silver dollars fell with deep gloomy chimes through the men's fingers. The roll of the ivory ball from the roulette room rolled through the place, like something loose going frantically round in a brain. Frieda watched Charley and Ada come from the office, Ada going alone to the roulette room and Charley to the crap room in back.

He thought Charley didn't look good. His eyes shone too black and he walked too carefully, like someone drunk. He saw Charley stop in the doorway, pretending he wasn't looking at anything in particular. But Frieda knew why he had stopped and what he was looking at. It was the two strangers Sleigh had let in an hour ago. He knew Charley was sizing them up.

Charley was puzzled by the looks on the strangers' faces. It was a young look, too anxious and trustful. Though he was almost certain they could not be part of the Chicago mobs he was puzzled by the way they acted, too friendly and too nervous. He could not tell whether they meant it or not. It might just be put on.

He looked them over carefully again, swiftly, up and down, on the far side of the crap table, their heads swinging together, right, left, right, left, as the dice sped from a man's hand, rolled, bumped, knocked against the boards, fell to rest. At last he caught Rob's eye. Rob was raking in the game. No one could have seen Charley's quick jerk of his head, yet in a second Rob had handed the croupier's rak to Titanic and was coming toward Charley.

"Who are those guys over there?" Charley asked.

"What guys?"

"The two young fellas. Do you know them?"

"Oh. Them," Rob said with a gratey laugh, though there was nothing to laugh at. "No. I never saw 'em before."

"Who let 'em in? How come strangers can walk right into the place?"

Rob shrugged his narrow shoulders. "I didn't." Though they were brothers, he acted afraid. It gave Charley a pain. He knew how much Rob stole and never did anything about it, so there was nothing to be afraid of. So long as he never caught him, it would be all right; but it would be bad to have to catch his own brother stealing.

Charley looked away. "Sleigh must have let them in." Sleigh was a good doorman. He trusted him.

Suddenly Rob was laughing out loud, a hiccuping thin laugh, unpleasant to hear. "You heard from Ma lately?"

Charley frowned. "No, I didn't hear from Ma. Why should I?" But the question had reminded him—he reached into his pocket for his money, beginning to peel off twenty-dollar bills to give Rob to send home to their mother.

Rob kept on laughing. "She wrote me. She said to tell you everything was O.K. on the farm."

Charley watched Rob carefully, knowing there was something he had to tell because of the way he kept laughing. "What else?" he asked.

"She said to tell you. You should stop sending her money, because she doesn't want any of your money." He looked with scorn down at Charley's hand. "She said she doesn't want your money. She doesn't like where it comes from. All the money you've been sending her, she gave away to the Lutheran Church."

He kept laughing as though it were a funny joke he was telling Charley.

"What's so funny about that?" Charley asked.

Rob's laugh faded away. "I thought it was funny," he whispered. "Ma thinks your dough's no good. She thinks it's dirty." He tried his laugh again but it was dead. "That was plenty dough you sent her. It went right from this place to the church."

Then his eyes were swinging and little arcs of sweat came beneath them. He mopped his face, forgetting to use his handkerchief, using the palm of his bony hand.

"Get back to your work," Charley told him. "Keep your eyes on those fellas. They look all right, but I'm not sure." He let his narrow gaze wander over toward them, trying to force down what he felt toward his brother. "I'm not sure. I wish I knew who they were and how they got in. I wish I knew," he said.

THE rain knocked steadily against the boarded windows of the crap room. But Rob did not hear it. His hands shook as one of the two strangers whom Charley told him to watch tossed over a ten-dollar bill and asked for ten silver dollars. He bet a dollar and Rob threw the dice over to him. Little Bergson put a quarter on the line to bet the stranger would pass; he always gambled with quarters, never winning or losing much. He had a whole fistful of them that he carried around in an old salt bag and when he won, he tried to get Rob to pay him off in shiny new quarters. The new quarters glistened in Bergson's gnarled, gnome-like fingers as he dropped them or plucked them up from the line. He was so little and shrunken that Charley always grinned and asked him, what he was going to do if he broke the bank some day, how was he ever going to carry all the quarters home?

The stranger rattled the dice. No one was betting much and so there was little excitement around the table. But a hush always fell when a man rolled the dice. The dozens of pairs of eyes watched like birds of prey as the ivory flash streaked across the sea of green felt.

"Let 'em roll, boys," Rob said.

There was a mild murmur. No one paid much attention as the stranger threw the dice, caught a seven, and won his first dollar bet right off.

CHARLEY'S son Paul stood at the door of the speakeasy with Esther Rosnik. He was too tall and too thin. He tried to keep his hair combed but it fell on his high forehead. His scarf dangled from inside his coat. He had a wild, arrogant glitter in his eyes and stood there smiling, his face pale, his nostrils aching. His lean animal cheeks were Charley's, but the light hair was Lon's. He looked like someone who owned the place. His expensive clothes helped his arrogance, as though he were a little better than anyone else in Magglioni's. Only his twitching fingers and an occasional tremble of the corner of his mouth gave him away.

Magglioni's parlor was crowded with wine and beer drinkers. Paul led Esther to a table, his smile curling in his pale face, his long arm held out to protect Esther from the crowd, his contempt for these other young people, as well as for Magglioni, plain. Only by looking closely could anyone have seen the wretchedness in his eyes or the fright behind the too-set smile. He tried to look bored at being there. Esther's full dark lips were laughing; she too had to hide her discomfort because of her plain clothes. They were as cheap as his were expensive. At the table, she felt his long leg bump against hers. Then his eyes dropped and she saw color run swiftly over his face. She looked where he had been looking and saw Elizabeth Kersten, the rich brewer's daughter.

They did not know where to look. They felt out of place, because he was a gambler's son and she was poor. He laughed, talked rapidly, but his eyes kept lurching toward Elizabeth Kersten in the corner; his longing was so plain.

Paul suddenly noticed the mend of the shoulder of Esther's coat and a thin shame crawled on his face. He clamped his teeth together. He laughed contemptuously toward Elizabeth Kersten in the corner; he made the laugh sound as if he were too good for her crowd. A fierce longing hung in his eyes, but always behind his eyelids he saw his father spoiling everything, smelled the foul smoke odor that clung to his clothes, heard the dull

stories about men with nicknames like Titanic, saw his black hat and silk shirts.

He had never been to his father's place or he might have understood him better. All Paul knew, down in Magglioni's cellar, was how much he wanted to be with the girls like Elizabeth Kersten, whose father was rich and owned the brewery, or the boys with their pipes and smooth jackets. His clothes cost as much as theirs did. He had a Peerless roadster parked outside, glossy in the rain, that his father had bought for him, though there was no one to ride in it laughing and singing. He thought of friendships he made, suddenly ended, or dates with girls at the last minute broken. And he thought of the loaded question that was always asked at parties or dances, What does your father do? and the numbness that struck his tongue. He thought of his mother, in some puzzled way flaring at him, her cheeks pinched with her sudden defensive and humiliated rage, Wasn't his father good enough for him? What more could anyone do for a boy than his father did? Where did he get so high and mighty?—an angry crystal drop hanging on her lashes, until his own face went white with shame, knowing how he was hurting her, for he loved his father but did not understand him. He wanted to understand him but the wall was there.

CHARLEY was standing in front of the mirror that Sleigh had bought at the dime store to give the hallway a dressed-up air.

He was adjusting the diamond stickpin in his tie when Pete Senta came up to him.

Charley's eyebrows went up. "Who's taking care of the wheel?"

"I put Titanic on. He wasn't busy."

"Titanic's a good wheel man but he can't count fast enough. He doesn't pay off fast enough to suit the customers."

Pete wasn't listening. "It's a funny thing Rosnik hasn't come in yet," he said. "He wasn't in last night, and I figured maybe he wasn't feeling well. But it's a funny thing he hasn't come in tonight."

"If he wasn't feeling good last night, maybe he isn't feeling good tonight," Charley grinned. "You worry too much. You'll worry yourself right into the grave."

But Pete's forehead remained creased. He didn't trust men like Rosnik. It worried him. There had been trouble with Rosnik before. "It's still early," he said. "He might still come in."

"What's the difference?" Charley asked. "I don't like him. I'm glad when he stays away."

Pete had another thought. His lower lip jutted slightly with his laughter. "Maybe he's broke."

"Maybe he is," Charley grinned. "He's been losing for three weeks steady."

Pete worried again. "He lost last time. That's what caused the trouble."

"I like to see a man like that lose," Charley said. "It does me good. He hasn't got a right to be in an honest gambling joint. Ten years ago, before I had a place of my own, he beat me out of six hundred in a stud game. He was in cahoots with the dealer and the dealer kept flashing the cards to him. I'll never forget the way Rosnik laughed when he took all my money." Charley rubbed his hands thoughtfully on the back of his neck. "I like to see a man like that lose."

It was why he had let him back into the place a month ago, even after the trouble a year ago, he thought. Because he liked winning his money back, no matter how long ago he had lost it. A man who was an honest gambler always came out ahead in the end. He liked to see men who dealt crooked end up broke. It was right. It was his belief, like the beliefs of people who went to church.

"It still worries me," Pete said. "He'll lose all his money and there'll be trouble again. How much money has he dropped?"

"About four thousand. No more."

"That's a lot for Rosnik."

"That's the interest on my six hundred."

"That's good interest," Pete said, beginning to laugh, his admiration for Charley plain on his face.

PAUL laughed. He let his arrogant gaze rove over Magglioni's, to the boys along the bar in the corner, their heads tipped back, the beer bottles like trumpets in their hands, their laughter loud between swallows. He saw Elizabeth Kersten drinking the red sweet wine from a cup. All around him was laughter, something comfortable in it, against the rain outside.

Esther knew some of the boys, the ones without dates along the bar. They were the kind who didn't date much; they were working their way through college or were athletes, supposed to be in training, or were boys still without the nerve to take out a girl. They were not as well dressed as the boys with dates. But among themselves they kept laughing, the beer bottles clamped in their strong hands, their heads tipping again and again.

She noticed how Paul was drinking, rapidly, taking long swallows like the boys at the bar. But then her eyes dropped, afraid to look at him. For she could hear them and she did not want him to hear what they were saying at the bar. . . .

"What'll we do now?" "Let's go to Charley King's," one of them said abruptly, breaking into laughter. Then they all laughed, enviously, a little in embarrassment—it pleased them too much. "Charley King's? Why, they clip you in there! That's a big joint." They looked at each other feverishly. "I'd like to go to Charley King's place. I've got five bucks in my pocket. . . ." "They'll get it away from you fast enough, they're all hijackers!" But they laughed, swallowing beer to cover their excitement. "Well, let's go, why don't we try? Wouldn't it be keen? I bet they'll let us in if we've got dough to take from us," they said, knowing they wouldn't go. They couldn't get in, they wouldn't dare to go, but they would have liked to try. They would have given anything to get into a place like Charley King's.

Paul heard them, but he could not hear the envy in their voices. He could not hear, because he deafened himself on purpose, how they would have given half their lives to be a man like Charley King. Inside himself he began to fight, his father, the boys at the bar, Esther, Elizabeth Kersten, everything around him. His hair fell over his forehead, clinging damply, his face paled and the sharp teeth bit on his lip.

His nerves pulled tight. Then he looked at Esther. He gave her a sharp, wild laugh and winked at her. She could think he had not heard them.

"Would you like to go some place else?" Esther asked. "I don't like it here."

He nodded. They began to leave but when they passed the bar one of the boys stopped Esther. Paul could not hear what Esther and the boy were saying. He saw the boy smile and Esther smile and then words came at last, plainly from Esther's mouth, "This is Paul King."

The boy held out his hand. He laughed easily, though Paul could not hear the friendliness that was in it. "King?" he heard, and did not catch the pleased astonishment. "You're not related to this guy we were just talking about, Charley King?—"

"No," Paul said.

"I thought he might be your dad," the boy said.

PAUL, in one second, saw his mother sitting alone nights, husbandless, saw his father, and his own jail-like life, all flash across his brain. The pictures were flames, burning inside his head. Then with the denial came the need to strike out, to fling his arms. It was senseless, swinging his long arm into the line at the bar. But for one second he fought wildly.

It took only that long for Magglioni to hoist him up, carry him toward the door and throw him out, a strange sight, since Paul was so tall and his legs kicked so. In that second he could hear the roaring laughter and it seemed that Elizabeth Kersten's roared loudest against his throbbing eardrums. Magglioni, a moment later, opened the door again to fling out his blue scarf. Esther picked it up from the wet sidewalk. Magglioni watched after them, holding the door open several inches. He saw the boy and girl running toward the roadster, the girl hanging onto him, like something she was afraid to lose. They were alone again, locked out.

Magglioni looked out. He had heard the boy at the

bar ask if he was Charley King's son. No, that couldn't be Charley's kid, he thought. He had heard Charley talk about his boy. A boy like that couldn't be a boy of Charley's. The rain blew in on him, a thin spray on his brightly striped shirt. Anyway, the kid said so himself that he wasn't, and he closed the door on the gusts of rain.

PAUL took Esther home. Then he kept driving on the wet, sucking streets. He had never been to the big place before, and he did not know why he was going now. He did not know what, but there was something final he had to tell his father.

He was surprised how dark the place looked. Six wide steps went up to the doorway, behind which the hall light burned. The darkness and the single light made it seem like leaving this world, entering another. Inside the hallway it was warm. He brushed the rain from his narrow shoulders, from his hair.

It was Sleigh who lifted the cover on the peephole.

"You can't come in," Sleigh said. All of a sudden he

felt important. He grinned. "I ain't going to let you in, I don't know you." Charley would be pleased, the way he took care of that door. "You beat it. I ain't going to let you in if you wait there ten years."

"I'm Charley King's son," Paul said.

"Ho!" Sleigh laughed.

"You'd better let me in," Paul said. Then he brought out his driver's license, holding it up for the single eye to see.

Like magic the door swung open. Paul went inside. The bright cones of light falling from the hanging lamps hurt his eyes, with the darkness and thick smoke above them. The richness of the rooms startled him, the heavy drapes over the blank windows and the shining parquet floors; and the crowds, the men pushing against each other, the groups around tables, framed in the hot yellow light, the men hunched, leaning forward on their chairs, their itching, praying hands clenched over the white-topped tables; and the cries from the blackjack table, "Hit me—go on, hit me!" the strident, defiant laughter and the roar of the electric fan and the slapping of cards, the curses from the poker tables, "A six spot! All right, you louse, so you deal me a damn ten!"—the thudding and hum from the crap room "Oh baby, baby, baby! . . ." —the drone from the roulette room, a slick crooning voice, "All right, ladies and gentlemen, no more bets—here we go!" and the rocking laughter and explosions of rage or the rapping of the rain on the blind windows through which no one could see.

It was Frieda who recognized him. Frieda had been to Charley's house. He tossed down the deck of cards. He took lumbering steps toward Paul.

"Charley's boy," he said. And "Who? This kid? He's Charley's boy?" someone else asked loudly, smiling at Paul. Pete Senta shot a glance from the roulette room, hearing the name, a look both amazed and pleased. They all looked up in wonder. "So you're Charley's boy? Titanic, look—this is Charley's boy."

"This boy here?" they asked, glancing up from their cards. "This the boy going to college now? Your name's Paul, isn't it?" They seemed to know all about him, these men who were his father's friends. "Say, Ada—I want you to meet Charley's kid!" "He looks like him," the woman smiled. They put their hands on his shoulder. "No kidding? Is this Charley's boy?"

He looked at the men, puzzled. They seemed to think he was wonderful, just because he was Charley's son.

IT was about two o'clock. In the hallway of the big place a pool of water was seeping under the front door from the steady rain.

In the crap room, little Bergson was still betting his quarters. It was a cinch, he thought greedily. He had been gambling for twenty-five years but he had never had a cinch like this. It was like taking candy from a baby. He plopped out his quarter, watched the dice roll, gave a little snigger, and like magic two quarters rolled back to him over the sea of green felt. His brownish face grew bloated with the luck he was having.

For all he did was to bet along with the two strangers. He put his quarter on the line, betting that they would pass. Each time one of the two strangers won, Bergson won. And he won on almost every roll. A few of the other crapshooters had cashed in their chips and were leaning against the table in silence, watching the unusual run of luck of the two men. They were already six or seven hundred dollars ahead. Each time they won they would give a soft hiccup of laughter; they had the perpetual surprise of new gamblers. They had not known it was so easy to make money—you just shoveled it in, you scraped up the chips with both hands—their pockets would bust with all the money. The timid mistrust with which they had begun was gone. Something began to tingle in their fingers, flow in their blood and glint in their eyes. Often, as they collected their bets, they would glance with a quick grin down the table to Rob.

Rob was sweating. He was working hard. He tried not to look nervous. He would laugh at nothing at all, his lower lip drooping away from his unclean teeth, a grating laugh as he paid off the bets, or tossed in new dice, or when he saw Frieda shuffle into the room. Frieda was only looking for Charley to tell him his boy was here. But when Rob saw him, the raspy laughter dropped from his lower lip.

He changed the dice again as Frieda came near the table. But also, as he changed them with a flick of his fingers, he tossed in the right dice, Charley's dice, an honest pair, not the crooked dice he had been slipping to help his friends, the two strangers, clean out his brother Charley's bankroll, the way they had planned it together for weeks.

EVERYONE was looking for Charley. "It's the kid," Pete Senta explained to Sarah Johnston. "Charley's kid just came into the place, but no one can find Charley. He's gone again."

Sleigh was passing a new tray of highballs. "I know where he went," he said, already beginning to believe what he was going to say. "He went home to get some fish poles. In the morning, when we close up the place, he's going to take us up north fishing."

Paul stood waiting for his father. The men eyed him secretly. They went up to him. "We can't find him," Pete Senta said. "That's the second time today he disappeared." Pete tried to be friendly, because he was the nearest to Paul's age.

Paul looked puzzled. He could not understand the way they clung around him. "Charley's got a fine boy," Sleigh said happily, looking at him. "I'll bet he takes him up north fishing with us!"

"You play poker?" Pete asked. "Would you like to sit in a game?"

"No," Paul said.

Pete suddenly was protective about Charley. He began disliking Paul. "How come you don't play poker?" he asked, his eyes flashing.

"Charley don't want his kid to gamble," Frieda said.

Paul was silent. He looked angry, confused, and ready to fight. But he had begun to enjoy it; there was something strange about the attention. "Is that Charley's kid?" one of the men called from the blackjack table, a card held arrested in his hand. "That a fact?"

But Paul was already noticing a change. "Sure. It's Charley's kid," Frieda said, talking about him as if he were not there. "It's his boy!" But already they were looking strangely at him, the men around the tables and the men standing with him. No, you're not, you aren't Charley King's boy, their eyes said. *No, I am not his son!* Paul wanted to cry out as they surrounded him. But there

was no need for him to cry out, for they were thinking it already. They peered at him from under their hats, searched over his face and body, looking silently for something to link him with Charley. Little by little their eyes turned away from him. He felt dizzy. The men went back to their games. No, it wasn't Charley's boy, not in a hundred years.

Pete looked down at the floor. "I don't know where Charley is," he said. "We don't know where he went to."

"Charley?" Titanic said, coming from the wheel room. "I saw him go out ten minutes ago, with Kersten and the barber Joe Joseph."

"Kersten, the millionaire?" Paul asked.

"He's a nice fella," Pete answered absently.

THERE were small stained-glass windows in the hallways and a refined hum in the barroom of the German Club. It was an old club, the oldest in the city, with lawns around the building and polished oak staircases and thick rugs on the floor. Charley had tried to join the club a year ago, and had only nodded his head and grinned faintly, without rancor, when Kersten came to tell him they had blackballed him. Charley had expected they would.

But the same men who had solemnly blackballed him in their meeting were glad to see him walk into the bar with Kersten and Joe Joseph; they hung around Charley and said they'd like to drop into his place some day, and maybe they could have a game of golf together. Wouldn't he like a drink? They secretly would have liked to be like him even though, naturally, they could not let a professional gambler appear on their membership list.

"Well, is something on your mind?" Kersten was asking quietly. They had driven to the club in Charley's Cadillac but all the way had talked only about the rain, blowing in the wind as it rose again. They had spoken about nothing important, holding their minds blank ever since Charley had come up to Kersten at the roulette table and said could he see him a minute, there was something he wanted to ask him about; and Kersten had said, "How about the club? It's a nice quiet place to talk." Charley was glad to get away from the gambling place, which had grown so big, so strange and empty. "Well, you wanted to ask me about something?" Kersten said, in the bar.

"I was wondering about Florida," Charley said. He looked up abruptly. His face looked young and hard, Kersten thought. Then Kersten looked vaguely surprised at another thought that struck him—though he did not know why, he suddenly saw something new and very plain in Charley's face. It was a face that was still eager to live, to meet things rather than turn away from them; but over it was a hollowness. "I thought maybe you could tell me what it's like down there," Charley said. "I thought maybe I'd take a trip down."

"Florida?" Kersten was saying. "You'll like it there. That's the place to rest. You look like you could use a rest," he said, turning to Charley again with the disturbing thought that the face, which looked so young and hard, also had a stubborn exhaustion in it. "You'll like it down there. The beaches and hotels and race tracks and fishing," he said, wondering why he talked with a sudden urgency. "You could rest."

Charley nodded. He felt better, thinking about Florida. A good rest might be the solution, the doctor had said; get away from your job and get other things on your mind, stop worrying and stop running a race with life, because life will win, you won't, my friend. Suddenly everything became possible; everything was going to be all right in Florida, Charley thought. He was thinking of the fishing in the ice-blue waters and the rank sunshine and Lon sitting under an umbrella at the hotel, looking the way she always should have looked, rich and important and contented, and somehow making it all right, his years of gambling.

And Paul, to mix with the crowd he liked, and walk like a prince into the expensive dining rooms, pleased perhaps at last that Charley's ready money could buy these things. Then he was thinking that by going to Florida he could escape the raid, his name in the paper—if he left at once, that was. In Florida, his life would come back. He grew certain. What else had he worked for, all his years, except this moment, to take his money, Lon, Paul, to live in a rich hotel waking up mornings to see the wide tossing ocean through the window?

"I think I'll take a run down there," Charley said. "I'll take my wife and boy along."

He was laughing. The sound made Kersten feel much better. He put his hand on Charley's shoulder.

"What do you think of that?" Charley was saying to Joe Joseph. "How does it sound? A nice vacation, just laying around in the sun all day, with a little time out at the race tracks—" His face bristled with the rising excitement. He was already thinking he ought to call up Lon, to tell her to pack.

"Florida?" Joe Joseph asked. He smiled remotely. "That must be some place down there."

Charley grinned, reached for his hat, and put a bill on the bar. The three men walked out of the bar together, surprised when they got outside to see that the rain had stopped.

IN the crap room you could hear the sweat drop. That's what Sleigh said, his face grave. No one was shooting craps now but the two strangers and Bergson, still betting his quarters.

Frieda watched the dice like an animal stalking prey. All the men's faces were shiny with watching. Ada was drunk and watched with an angry, bent smile on her lips. Pete Senta kept asking if anyone knew where Charley might be. Until Charley came, they could not close up the game. Charley made it a slogan that no game would ever close until his bankroll was gone. But they did not believe it. They could not even change rakers, because this was Rob's game. He was boss in the crap room. But Rob would have given anything to have someone else rake. He began to breath heavily, gasping through his narrow lips, and the shrill drunken cries of the two strangers kept coming like pistol shots in his ears.

For something strange had happened to the two men. They were drunk with luck. Rob tried to catch their eye but whenever he did they looked back blankly. They forgot they knew him. They had gone wild with their luck. They forgot Rob and their whole scheme. He wasn't even throwing in the crooked dice any more. He used Charley's own dice, honest dice, and still the two men kept win-

ning. He lost his nerve. He wasn't even a good crook.

They were over ten thousand winner. Rob had supposed that when they had won a few thousand, they would cash in, go home, and split with him some place later. But that was when the strange thing happened to the men. They went crazy, deaf and blind with their luck. They forgot to stop; they could not stop. The run of luck caught them and dragged them along, and the wilder they grew the more they won. They were betting the limit, a hundred dollars, on every roll of the dice. Bergson had almost every quarter in the house piled up before him. Everyone else in the place had quit his game to come and watch. No one talked. Only the dice rolling, the shrill high laughter of the two men as they won still another bet.

Titanic suddenly thought of something. He moved soundlessly beside Pete Senta. "If Charley's with Kersten, maybe they went to the German Club."

Pete ran for the telephone. But Sleigh also heard him. He had to help Charley. He took one look at the crowded room, the hard-breathing men in the silence, the jam against the table, and rushed from the big place, not even taking his hat or coat, racing down the wet streets and stumbling once, rushing to tell Charley what was happening, that a couple of strangers were cleaning him out.

BUT Sleigh had run only a block when he saw Charley's Cadillac go by. He turned, racing back to the place. When he got there Charley and J. Walter Kersten and Joe Joseph were already going up the steps.

Titanic let them in and whistled softly. Charley took one look at Titanic's face and asked "What's the matter?"

"They're taking you," Titanic said, following after him. "Those two strange guys, the ones no one knows how they got in. They've got the cashbox nearly empty."

Charley stopped. He looked at Titanic and then saw Sleigh, out of breath, running after him. "Is that possible?" Charley said, but he wasn't talking to Sleigh or Titanic. He looked down at his hands, arrested by what Titanic had said: the two strangers, the ones he had been mistrustful about.

Sleigh shook his head. He looked envious and dismayed. "They sure taking you, Charley," he said.

"You don't say so," Charley said. He could feel the muscles of his face and body pull tighter. "How much are they winner?"

"Nearly twelve thousand," Titanic said.

"You don't say."

A happier thought struck Sleigh, as he followed Charley into his office. "Your boy's here," Sleigh said. "He's a fine boy."

"You don't say so," Charley answered.

But he had not heard Sleigh. He forgot everything. He was bristling, beginning to be alive again. He already had his coat off, and was kneeling to open the safe, knowing what he must do to stop the two strangers from breaking him. He pushed his hat back on his head. He was suddenly happy, drawing out the bags of silver dollars, heavy as stones. He took out the piles of paper bills, neatly stacked and tied, over thirty thousand dollars' worth.

Pete Senta burst into the office. Charley had never seen him look scared before. "Charley," Pete cried. "They'll bust you! Rob's paying off just like money was dirt!" He reached for a drink. "They got Rob took for more than twelve thousand already. I never saw such a run!"

"What a world, what a world," Charley said.

"What you doing with all that cash?" Pete looked surprised. "They'll take it right away from you, honest, Charley, you never saw such a run! Aren't you going to close the game?"

"I wonder where they come from," Charley said.

"Where from? I don't know. They've got Rob crazy."

"Rob never went crazy," Charley said.

"It's screwy," Pete said. "It's not right. They look like a couple of suckers—"

"Some suckers!" Charley laughed.

Pete looked down at the money. "They win every bet they make. They'll kill you," he said, but his voice suddenly fell. He was defeated. Charley was defeated.

"Are they on the square?"

"I watched like a hawk. I don't see 'em slip any dice in. The shills don't either—I asked them myself." He shook his head, looking at the squirming bills. "They'll kill you."

"Change the dice?"

"Fifty times Rob changed the dice! He's turned green. Honest to God, he's green!" There were tears of rage in Pete's eyes. He sounded mournful, thinking what the strangers were going to do to Charley. It was going to be terrible. Everyone was crazy. He wondered if Charley was crazy too. Pete had nerves like iron; he had never known what fear was before. But when his nerves cracked, thinking how the men were breaking Charley, they cracked all at once. He had watched the men; but Charley had not seen them yet.

But Charley had not moved for several minutes. He was slowly piling up his nerve. He had never heard of a run like this. Most other gamblers would close the game, knowing they could not win once the luck turned against them like that. But he never thought for a moment of closing the game. Something drove him. Even if he lost it would be all right, but he had to fight. He could not lose. He remembered Florida. He was thinking that all evening, without knowing it, he had been fighting for everything in his life. He took out extra cartons of new dice from the safe, stacking them beside the bags of money. He raised his head abruptly, shocked by the deadly silence that had come over the gambling place. Only from the crap room there came a faint murmur, a whispering, and the rush of the dice.

CHARLEY carried the bags of silver and paper money into the crap room. Pete Santa followed him, bringing the new cartons of dice.

The crap room was hot and foul with the gambler's breaths. All over the room was a haze of smoke, the odor of men and money, a silence broken only by Rob's exhausted, droning voice.

Then Charley saw the gleeful faces of the two men who were breaking him, betting wildly and laughing as they won bet after bet. They were young, maybe thirty-three or thirty-four, he figured, and drunk with all the money they were winning. As he approached the table, elbowing his way through the crowd, his face was as calm as Rob's was frenzied. But a restless joy kept pounding in him.

Rob saw him coming, and all his body slumped with relief. Charley was back and could shut down the game. "All right," Rob said. "That's all, fellas. The game's closed."

"The game isn't closed," Charley said.

But he did not look at Rob or anyone else. He wiped his hands together, once he had set the money down beside the almost empty cashbox.

He looked at Rob. He might have asked only what the weather was like outside. "How much did they take you for?"

"It's over twelve thousand now," Rob whispered. Charley saw he was shaking all over. He did not know how Rob had been cheating him, but all at once he knew Rob was guilty and in some way mixed up with what was happening. But then he turned his glance quickly away. He picked up the dice Rob had dropped on the table, and felt them hot, sweaty, sticky in his hand. But they were his own dice; the perfect dice.

He scowled and then snorted. Then he stepped up on the six-inch-high raker's stand where Rob had stood. The two men, who had come in with only a few hundred dollars but now were over twelve thousand winner, looked at him cravenly. In their drunkenness they were afraid he might shut up the game. Then he rolled out the dice to them, and the game began again.

No one else gambled or wanted to gamble—everyone pushed around the crap table to watch the phenomenal run of luck of the two men. They kept betting the limit, one hundred dollars, on each throw of the dice. They scratched the air with their ecstatic choking laughter, and had the whole table to themselves save for little Bergson, down at the end, his cap jerked forward over his age-old face as he bet quarter after quarter.

Charley laughed, watching Bergson's quarter plop down

on the line alongside the hundred-dollar bets. He glanced at Pete's face beside him, no muscle twitching, glanced around and saw Frieda shaking his chunky head, his face creased and solemn.

"The limit's off, gentlemen," Charley said.

The crowd rustled when he said that. He watched to see whether the two men were slipping dice in. He knew his own dice were honest, and with them all he needed was time and the nerve to outlast the strangers.

One of the men, senseless with his luck and elated with the sky-high limit, bet five hundred dollars right off, chuckling to himself, playing with his whole body, shaking his head, snapping his fingers, puckering his mouth as he whispered his love to the dice. He threw a six for his number. On the next roll he threw a six again. It was as easy and insane as that. He threw up his hands. It was like the first hours of love, it was all velvet; he could not imagine his luck ever changing.

Charley tossed over the five hundred dollars, and a quarter down to Bergson. "Is that possible?" he smiled. He began his monotonous drone. "Why, you wouldn't believe it possible!" He made it sound that he paid off gladly. His throat grew dry.

His eyes were glazed with watching the dice so intently, but he never dropped his aloof smile. The room was deathly still. "Why, the gentleman's number is eight, that's a nice number, and he bets me another five hundred . . . that's tall money, gentlemen, if you're asking me! Why, you wouldn't think it was possible—the gentleman wins again!" He kept up the casual drone. But the sweat was singing in his temples.

When the men had won close to twenty thousand, they began to bet a thousand dollars on each roll of the dice. Pete did not move when the men threw the thousand dollars out on the table for the first time; but J. Walter Kersten did, his brow contracting, puzzled by this kind of money and gambling, though he had a million dollars himself. He shook his head. Joe Joseph looked spellbound at the sights he was seeing. A few of the men cleared their throats—the sound was harsh in the stillness. Ada did not look at the dice or the men but at Charley.

But Charley laughed curtly when he saw the first thousand-dollar bet come up. Then he shook himself with relief, knowing it was what he was waiting for. He spoke more rapidly, fending for time. He wanted to feed the hot, exultant, hypnotized hopes of the men. He knew that soon they would lose their heads; they would go crazy and blind and weep, a terrible sight to see. And he knew that if only he had enough time, and could drive the men, and his nerve and the bankroll lasted, the dice must cool. The bigger the bets came, the more chance he had. *"Well, gentlemen, what will it be? The sky's the limit!"* he called. As he cast the dice across the green felt, he swung a look of relief toward Pete; and as he turned his head, saw Paul.

AS the dice were flung out and tossed and flung again, Paul had looked at his father. And what he had been seeing and learning made him watch in pained wonder. Paul had never seen his father before. He felt something strange in the gambling house. It still puzzled him that the men had thought he was wonderful because he was Charley's son. Then for no reason they had begun to think he was not wonderful. One by one they had drifted away; he had been left alone to wander among the cardplayers and smoke and crowded tables.

He had roamed through the rooms alone, wondering who this rouged, played-out, drunken woman was, or the old woman with diamond-like clusters of grapes at her ears. Strangely, he had been flattered by the attention the men had given him. Alone again, he made up for it with scorn. He listened to the subdued, hungry voices from the tables. *"Three janes, why is that all you've got? I've got a full! Hit me!—Hit me—come on, please, please!—"*

Words, sounds, cries of laughter he had never heard before. He felt out of place and did not know why he minded it, not fitting in. He moved through the rooms until he went into the crap room, and heard the hush of the men, the click of the dice, the moans of *"Three's the number, oh baby come again, three three three she is!"* and the hypnotized, sputtering laughter of the two men. When Charley came in, Paul felt a pain like bright light smash through his arms and legs. But it subsided, even against his will. But he still could not understand. There was respect instead of scorn on the faces of the crowd as they watched Charley come up to the crap table. It was a different father than Paul had even seen. This was how his long nights were filled, the nights for which Paul had blamed him, the nights which had made his mother a widow. And all these men were his friends.

Even the important ones, like J. Walter Kersten. He was standing next to Paul. Kersten had a friend whom they said was his barber, and with both of them his father had been drinking at the German Club. It did not make sense, his father's friendship with a millionaire and the millionaire's barber. In his own life friendships did not come this way. There was only Esther and himself. There were the wanted ones and the unwanted ones. It made him ache to get out of the gambling place, and by pushing his way he had got as far as the door when a hand touched his arm.

IT was Kersten. He nodded his kindly white face toward Paul. He was smiling vaguely. "So you're the son of Charley King."

Nothing moved in Paul except that he nodded his head.

Kersten looked down at his locked fingers, then looked up, studying Paul's face. "You look like him." He kept smiling. "Your father's a great cardplayer." A look of faint shock came into his eyes. "How old are you?"

"Eighteen," Paul said.

Kersten nodded thoughtfully. That was old enough, his nod said. The boy's not just a boy any longer. "Come over here."

He took Paul into the empty wheel room. "I don't think your father's very well. Did you know that?"

Paul said nothing. Kersten glanced up for an answer, then frowned. "You didn't know. But you're old enough. Sometimes you can just tell those things about people you like. He doesn't look well." He nodded. "This kind of life wears you down." He hesitated and added, "It does, son." He looked around. "Smoke in your lungs all night. Never any peace." He raised his head, sniffing mildly about him. "No fresh air. I think he's sick," and his nod told so much more than he could have said in words. His gaze was distant and sorrowful.

Paul understood all at once what he was telling him. His father was a sick man. But his father was also a good and great man. And it mattered to J. Walter Kersten, it mattered to everyone in the big place that night, to the played-out drunken woman and the barber and the young gambler named Pete and to Frieda and Sleigh —whatever terrible thing might happen to his father, either tonight at the crap table or a day or month or a year later, mattered to all of these because they loved him.

The sounds and sights that had been gathering in Paul's ears and eyes as he wandered alone through the gambling place, the clack of chips and the cries of *This is Charley's boy!* and the whirr of cards being shuffled and the liquor breaths, everything that had meant his father to him, suddenly crashed into meaning. Whatever happened to his father, none of these men wanted to let him go. Then he remembered his mother, and all her uncomplaining, endless nights—he recalled seeing something in her light eyes, something about the love she bore his father, understanding his aloofness, his wild and plaguing needs, her quiet knowledge that whatever he was, he must be, it was the way she wanted him. Remembering this look, he thought of her alone, without his father, and for the first time saw loneliness in someone beside himself.

"Your father's a fine man," Kersten's mild voice was whispering. "I never saw such nerve." He ran one finger across his mouth. "I'm afraid they're breaking him." He glanced toward the stacks of bills before the two drunken strangers. "That's a lot of money."

At the crap table, his father was changing the dice. For a brief moment Paul thought he had never seen this man before—he saw the dark, hunted eyes, the taut fingers, the pounding blood. Also he saw the wings of exhaustion under his father's eyes. He wondered why he let himself

be driven so; but, dimly, he was beginning to know. In a puzzling sense, though he perspired, though his lips looked dry and cracked, his father looked happy. In a swift flash he remembered a hundred things about his father, seeing him always alone, always plagued, always driven.

Then he saw something else. He saw that his father was fighting for his life, not only that of blood and flesh but for all the years of his life. And to all these men, pushing around the table, only one thing seemed to matter, whether this man, his father, who had always been a stranger to him, lost or won.

It was just then that Charley glanced up and for the first time saw Paul. Paul wanted to smile. But no muscle would move in Paul's face, for as he looked at his father another sound was pouring into his ears—the words he had said at Magglioni's, *He is not my father.* His face grew white, remembering it, and he did not shift his gaze. He held it steadily on this man standing up on the croupier's stand, his hand arrested as it cast the dice over the green felt table, and he would not move his eyes until he felt his own blood wash away the foul words he had said. Then he felt suddenly older, better, even joyous. This is my father, he was thinking, he is my father.

In the flash when Charley saw Paul, he forgot the thousand-dollar bets, the strangers, his bankroll. He had not heard Sleigh tell him that Paul was there. Paul was standing next to Kersten. He's Kersten's son, that's who, Charley was thinking. Pete, standing beside him, was his son. Paul looked like Kersten's boy, with the same bland face, the same smart look in their eyes. They went to colleges and liked to learn. But what if he had made himself that way, become respectable and rich like Kersten instead of a gambler and rich? or if he had made himself like Joe Joseph, a barber, poor but respectable instead of a gambler who might go broke? He felt the sinking pain of a man ashamed of himself before his son.

He did not know, when he glanced at Paul's white face, that the motionless gaze which he returned was not one of hate but of something waking in Paul, coming on this very night when Charley was losing everything—the understanding in Paul's brain and heart that there was something wonderful and great in his father, that here in this world of rolling dice and smoke and stifled oaths he had seen him at last.

CHARLEY kept paying off the two men, a thousand dollars at a crack, feeling everything he had made, his whole life, slipping through his fingers to feed the hunger of the two exultant, choking men. They shouted to the dice. They made throttled sounds as they rolled them and stood paralyzed for the hundredth-of-a-second before the dice fell dead. Charley would win a few bets; lose twice as much back in the next few throws. He knew what was happening—everything he had been in all his years was being taken from him.

His ears suddenly burst with what they heard. It was what one of the strangers said. He had been waiting all along to hear it. He flashed alert. For one of the strangers, gone blind to the value of money, flung out a sheaf of bills to the board.

"I'll bet two thousand," he said.

"Two thousand?" Charley said, "why, that's a lot of money on a single bet. . . . I'm not mistaken, the gentleman bets me two thousand?"

"Two thousand," the man said.

And won.

His fingers rumpled the money Charley tossed out. "Four thousand," he laughed, heaping it into a pile for the bet.

And won again.

As he raked in his winnings, four thousand dollars on a single roll, he burst into tears. But Charley never ceased his soft urging banter. "Well, gentlemen, four thousand dollars, here you are, count it . . . there it is, sir, you're welcome! . . .

"Yessir, four thousand dollars to the gentlemen . . . well, sir, you wouldn't believe it, would you?" he laughed wholeheartedly. "They're cleaning me out, clean as a whistle, never in my life did I see anything like it! . . . I wouldn't believe it if my own eyes didn't see it," he smiled, "that's the truth—*why, would either of you boys care to make the bet eight thousand?"*

"Take it easy," Pete whispered.

"Eight thousand, will you take, sir?" Charley repeated. His voice was steady and laughing. "Plenty of money, plenty of money, there's plenty more where this came from—" he droned, knowing there was little more. His muscles were stiff in pain. He had been holding himself in like iron so as not to lose his nerve, praying in desperation for a change of luck, while he kept up the banter to feed the drunken hopes of the two young men and make them drunker and wilder, lest they quit the game and walk out with all his bankroll.

"For the love of God, take it easy," Pete whispered.

"I'll bet the eight thousand," the stranger said.

"Stop him!" Rob broke out, and looked in terror around the table. "Can't no one stop him?"

The stranger was piling up the money for his bet. His hands shook. He was so hypnotized with winning that his eyes were glassy with greed. "Eight thousand," he hiccuped again, certain already that he would win the bet. And then in a sudden crash of fear burst out, "Eight thousand?" asking it like a crazy, senseless question. Appalled at what he was doing, he tossed in the money like something tainted.

"Why, we'll meet that bet," Charley said. "Yessir, the gentleman bets eight thousand and Mr. Bergson down at the end bets two bits, how do you like that, gentlemen? Eight thousand dollars and twenty-five cents! There you are, sir, roll the dice—four's the number! Yessir, roll them—*he rolls a nine,* why, that's tough luck, my friend, but try again, try again. . . . Why, would you believe it—*a seven and he's out!"*

"Won't you quit now?" Rob begged. "You won eight thousand back! Can't no one make him quit?"

"I'll bet another eight thousand," the stranger said, gone white, but drunk with hope as Charley had prayed he would be. All the value of money was gone. They kept up their expectant, hiccuping laughter, pretending the eight thousand dollars they had just lost was nothing. And their fever was a terrible sight to see.

"Is that the truth now?" Charley droned. "The gentleman places another bet of eight thousand dollars—why, that's the way we like our bets, the bigger the better! There you are, sir, throw them out—and *a four again!*

Hold your hats, gentlemen, will she, won't she?—a seven again, and the gentleman *kisses his bet goodby!"*

The two men, with their switch of luck, began to lose nearly every bet. After the two eight-thousand dollar bets they dropped to a five-thousand dollar bet, then to a thousand, and grew afraid. Then each of them won a thousand-dollar bet. But they were losing their nerve. Charley clung to his like iron. They no longer doubled their bets but tried to sober up, and looked like tired men awakening with hangovers and only reeled more recklessly in their blundering hopes. Charley kept up

his urging chatter. He would not let them go. They followed him blindly, blustering angrily as they tried to recoup the money they had begun to lose. Charley pushed his hat back on his head. Because they were once such great winners, he knew they would try, desperately and foolishly, to be great winners again.

The men around the table began to shift their feet. But they breathed more easily. Something was over; they looked anxious to be gone. Occasionally now they laughed. Rob let his underlip jut out in a burst of laughter each time Charley won another bet from the strangers. When it was certain that the run of luck was broken he blew his nose, went silently for his hat and coat with a hunted, bent look to his body, and left the big place without speaking to anyone.

Pete Senta looked down at the cashbox, almost empty at one time, but full now. All at once he realized what he had been through.

"I'll be damned," he whispered.

IN the office, Ada sat on Charley's desk, leaning forward to unroll her stocking again, rerolling it tightly just below her knee. He was going broke. She had left the crap room while the two men were still winning bet after bet, unable to stand the reckless look on his face.

She began to think, What if he went broke, and what if she could have the chance to be broke with him? She smiled, almost happily, thinking how she'd stick.

She was thinking how fast she would slip in at Charley's side, if this wife of his ever left him, when she looked up and saw a stranger standing in the doorway of the office.

He smiled politely. "Mr. King?" he asked.

She looked blankly at the man, uncrossed her legs and nodded her head toward the crap room. "He's in there." She watched him steadily. He began to leave. "But you'd better not bother him. Stay out of there."

"Then I'll wait," he said.

"Not in here," Ada said.

He left the office, and Ada recrossed her legs, trying to remember what she had been thinking about. Suddenly she remembered, and poured another drink. She was with her thoughts when Sarah came in and broke them off again. Sarah, with her Filipino chauffeur following her, gave out her high rasp of laughter.

"Has Charley gone broke yet?" she asked.

She said it like something that struck her funny, but it was not the way she felt. As soon as she had heard he was going broke she had the Filipino drive her home, and came back with her jet bag crammed with bills in case Charley needed them. What had struck her funny was the way you always wanted to do things for Charley, without even thinking about it first, even without his asking you. Ada laughed too, as in different ways each of them thought the same thing.

CHARLEY stood at the crap table, tossed out the dice, but he was beginning to feel tired. His voice was less coaxing and taut. The two men who had started to break the bank fought desperately to regain their lost luck. They cursed and one of them pounded his hand flat on the table each time he faded. They felt bleary watching their money melt away.

But Charley was no longer interested. Within a half an hour he had won back everything they had once been winner, along with the few hundred dollars they had brought in with them. Then he tossed each of them a twenty-dollar bill for carfare home and closed the game. And again he felt cheated. He was glad he did not see Rob around. He looked for Paul. Paul was gone. Frieda said he had left.

Charley smiled hollowly. Kersten came up to him. "That's a nice boy you've got," Kersten said. Charley nodded again but did not look at Kersten. He did not know how it was with Paul, that things were going to be better. All the elation of saving his bankroll was gone. He felt as if he had lost instead. For the last fifteen minutes in the crap room he had felt only tired, nothing more. Only once did he break into real laughter, when little Bergson snatched up the dice and flung them across the room because he had lost all his quarters.

SLEIGH said, "It's a good thing you didn't lose all your money, Charley, otherwise how we going to take that fishing trip up north, you and Frieda and me?" He looked grave, his mouth half open.

"The boat sure was rocking," Charley said, "but it's all right now, Sleigh. They tried to take me but they couldn't make it." Charley smiled.

"No one's ever going to take you," Sleigh said.

"I hope not," Charley answered. He was on his way from the crap room to his office. Pete followed behind him with the bags of silver and paper money and the

cashbox. The game was closed. Ada laughed gloomily when she heard Charley had saved his bankroll, though she could not remember why it should make her gloomy, but Sarah greeted him with her high crystal laugh.

It was only after he had closed up the back room and watched Pete return the money to the safe that the sleepiness overwhelmed him. He went to stand before the boarded windows. He could hear the wind blowing again down the alleyway. His body felt numb and tired. But only then did he realized how foolhardy he had been, risking all his bankroll to stop the stranger's run of luck, and now that he had his bankroll back again, he wondered why he had fought so wildly to save it, until he remembered Florida.

The thought of Florida made him think he had all of his life back again, held solid in his hands. Until he glanced down to something else he held in his hands, remembering the paper that had been put there by a man waiting outside his office door as he came from the crap room. He squinted. And as he read it, slowly, forming the words with his lips, he grew aware that something in the long night was ending.

He tossed the paper on his desk, sat down and clapped his hands together. "You wouldn't believe it was possible," he said.

"What's that paper?" Ada said.

"You wouldn't believe it," he said. Then he laughed, as at some secret bitter joke with himself.

Pete Senta was pouring himself a shot of whisky. He had not been looking or listening. But then he saw the paper. He turned grinning to Charley. "It's a summons," he said, as though Charley did not know.

Charley grinned back. Frieda was coming through the doorway with the boxes of dice and the croupier's rake to put them away. Then they all began to laugh. Once or twice a month a summons came; it was becoming a racket. It was always a joke. Someone lost a few dollars and sued Charley for twice that much, saying the place was crooked. Then Charley spun into a round of fixing with lawyers and plaintiffs before the case went to court, usually paying off about half the amount they sued for, even though they might not have lost that much. But he could not fight it in court, where a gambler was never believed. It was a blind alley from which he had to pay his way quickly. The publicity would have meant closing the place.

Sleigh came into the little office. He saw the paper and began laughing too. He was pleased that he could be in on this joke with his friends.

"I think that I'd better close up the place," Charley said.

But no one heard him. Nor did they notice he had stopped laughing. Titanic came in and saw the summons. "Another one," Titanic grinned.

Ada was still. She was looking at Charley. "How much?"

"Fifty thousand," Charley said.

Pete swung around. "No kidding."

"We'd better close up," Charley said.

Pete did not believe his ears. He looked worried and outraged. "Close up?" he asked. They never closed until six or seven. "It ain't even five o'clock!"

"Fifty thousand," Charley repeated, looking into their questioning faces. There was a stillness in the room and through it rang their love for Charley. Frieda moved heavily to look at the summons. Slowly they began to believe him. Pete suddenly poured a drink and offered it to him but he shook his head. Sarah was smiling like a bad child. Something was spreading over all of them. It was the trap. They did not know why, but this time they were caught. They knew it from the look on Charley's face.

Pete pursed his lips. "Fifty thousand? Why, there ain't that much money! Who's bringing suit? The mint?"

"Rosnik," Charley said. And after a moment added, "Well, not exactly—"

Titanic took the summons from Frieda's hands. "Mrs. Rosnik," he read. "Mrs. Max Rosnik plaintiff vs. Charles King, defendant. The sum of fifty thousand dollars extorted from the plaintiff's husband Max Rosnik by illicit means—" He looked up. "What's illicit mean?"

"That Rosnik bastard," Ada said, looking away.

"That bastard," Charley chuckled.

"That Rosnik," Sleigh said, looking puzzled, "he's been coming in here regular."

"He lost maybe three or four thousand bucks," Titanic said. He laughed curtly. "Why, how's he going to prove he lost any more? He hasn't got a case. You got witnesses!"

He glanced around at Charley's witnesses. For a moment they all felt better, thinking it was true.

But they knew Rosnik would be able to prove something, though they did not know what. It was a frame-up, but so wild that it was real.

"Close up," Charley said to Pete.

Pete flared up. "Close up?" he cried. "You going to let Rosnik make you close up the place?"

"I think we'd better lock up for awhile," Charley said. Then he glanced toward Sarah. In the silent office the clusters of diamond grapes on her ears shone brightly. "You wouldn't like to sell those earrings, would you, Sarah?" he asked. He was thinking how they would have looked on Lon, if they had gone to Florida. But now he already knew that they would never go. He got up without waiting for her answer.

THEN hate like something tangible and deadly spread through the gambling place. It was hate for Rosnik. Frieda went around closing up the poker and blackjack games and then Pete went to silence the wheel, cashing in the chips and stacking them neatly, while Sleigh got a broom to start sweeping the back room.

Titanic stood in front of the dead electric fan, poking the propeller with his long finger, his breath coming regularly and heavy with hate. A knock on the door made Sleigh look through the peephole; but he would not open the door, even for big Magglioni trying to get in after he had closed up his speakeasy for the night.

Sleigh looked at him as though anyone outside the door was a mortal enemy, from now on and until forever. Sarah asked Charley over for breakfast but Charley said No. Ada touched his arm and said, "That Rosnik ape can't beat you," but Charley laughed, scratching his head, saying "I don't know, I don't know"; so that a hard revenge flashed on Ada's face and no one knew what she was thinking as she went out after Sarah. The last of the customers put on their coats to leave. Kersten, who knew good lawyers, sat talking with Charley for ten minutes before he left with Joe Joseph.

The place was all half-lights and long shadows. Only the ones who worked in the gambling place were left. Sleigh kept repeating what he had heard Ada say. Frieda pulled out a chair and sat down beside a dark table. Titanic spat right where Sleigh had cleaned the floor. Their hate changed and it wasn't Rosnik so much that they hated, but just what it had done to Charley. They began to argue, but not with each other. They argued alone against something absent. In each one the dignity he did not even know he possessed was outraged, and it made their hate snap out, like Frieda who sat with his lips clamped together; or Pete Senta who locked himself in the washroom, combed his hair, and in hot-tempered rage swung his fist at his own reflection, the mirror shattering into his bloody knuckles.

ALONE in the wheel room, Charley looked at the chairs and stools stacked upside down on the table. Lifting the cover from the roulette wheel he gave it a spin with his fingers.

He dropped the ivory ball into the groove and then listened to its racket as it spun around. The wheel spun a long while.

All his life was exactly what it was now—himself standing alone while the ball spun its endless magical course.

He knew he would have to go home and tell Lon. Suddenly she was the only abiding thing in his life. He thought of Paul, not knowing how this could not really hurt Paul any more, that Paul had begun to understand. But he did know how defeated he was.

He had known at once that this was something he could not fix up. He knew that now they would break him and that the rest and the peace and the getting well in Florida were gone. He saw the jury, the kind that would never believe a gambler, not himself or Pete or Frieda or Sleigh, the kind that perhaps had never held cards or dice in their hands. He saw himself fighting for his life. He knew he was going to fight it and that it hardly mattered whether he won or lost, lived or died or died broke. His time was done.

The fight might take months; a week or a day or one minute too long. But he had fought tonight for everything that had meaning to him, and had been surprised at how viciously he fought. And he knew now he would fight again. This time he would have to fight in the open, not inside the walls of the big place, but before the whole world.

He could hear all of the voices; he had seen the looks a thousand times before in people's eyes. And he heard them assailing himself, Lon, Paul: It's a shame, they said, honest people earning hard money for a man like that to steal from them. What kind of man must he be, too lazy for an honest day's work, good-for-nothing, a thief, robbing decent poor people like the Rosniks. What kind of man can do these things? He heard the voices clearly and he heard himself arguing, but his voice growing more and more faint. He saw the righteous, contemptuous jury. He saw the Rosniks wisely wearing shabby, threadbare clothing in court. He did not know how they had framed him, but he knew he was caught before the voices and stony eyes.

And he still knew he was going to fight them because he had no choice.

At last the ivory ball nestled in one of the number grooves and the spinning of the wheel subsided. It ran down silently. He re-covered the wheel and turned out the light over the table. He picked up his hat. As he made his way toward the door he knocked over one of the chairs accidentally—as he glanced back in the half dark, the room had a look of angry chaos, the tipped chair, the empty table, the dust and stale smoke curling in the light that crept through the cracks in the boarded windows. Again he had the feeling of something ended. And as he left the room, there was no one to tell him that it did not matter how it ended, the thing had been, he had at least started at this place and ended at that. He had what few had. He had been. He was.

THE END

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

By Helen Greenwood

WASHINGTON TAPESTRY is **Olive Ewing Clapper's** reminiscences of her years in Washington with her newspaperman husband, the late Raymond Clapper. Mrs. Clapper writes that her most vivid memories of Washington's political and social life start with the election of 1932, but actually her experiences go back to 1917. She has based her book on notes that Raymond Clapper had made before he was killed in an airplane crash over the Marshall Islands.

Olive Ewing Clapper

While Mrs. Clapper has written a serious and detailed study of the past two and a half decades, the pages of her book are filled with lively anecdotes.

Writing of the 1936 election, she says that Landon drove out to Oyster Bay to pay his respects to Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt: "As the cavalcade of fine motor cars sped along, they passed thousands of WPA workers along the highway. These poor men watched this luxury stream past. They knew it was the Republican candidate's party. They didn't know that most of the cars carried newspapermen—not rich Republicans. When they reached Oyster Bay, a New York newspaperman said to Ray:

"'I think I made a lot of votes for Franklin Roosevelt back there on the road. Every block or so, I'd lean out of the car and yell to those men, 'Get to work, you lazy so and so's!" They probably thought I was a Republican politician.'"

Published by Whittlesey House, N. Y. Price $2.75.

YOUNG HERO WANTAGE is the **FRIDAY'S CHILD** of **Georgette Heyer's** delightful novel of that name, "Born to trouble," certainly, Hero was married in haste to Lord Sheringham and she gave him no time to repent at leisure.

When he discovered that she had called upon one of his friends in her own coach, he said to his crony, Lord Wrotham, "'You know, George, there's no keeping pace with her at all! How was I to guess I ought to have warned her to take a hackney, if she meant to call at a man's lodgings?'

Georgette Heyer

"George looked a trifle startled, and said: 'The point is she ought not to call at a fellow's lodgings, old boy.'

"'No, by Jove, she ought not!' agreed Sherry. 'Devil of a business being married, George! You've no notion! Never thought I should be kept so busy, but what with the Royal Saloon, the Peerless Pool . . . Bartholomew Fair, and now this, not to mention a few other starts —dash it, I don't have a quiet moment.'"

Lord Sheringham's troubles mounted, until finally his wife disappeared—spirited away by his three best friends who felt that he didn't fully appreciate Hero. He found, as they had anticipated he would, that not having Hero was the worst trouble of all.

This charming, gay, and authentic romance of the Regency period will enchant readers of all ages.

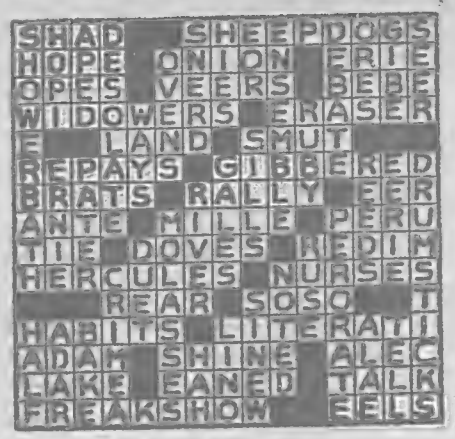
Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y. Price $2.75.

THE Hyperion Press has published three books this year that all art lovers will want to own. They are **Rodin**, by **Philip R. Adams; Rouault**, by **Edward Alden Jewell**; and **Degas**, by **Camille Mauclair.** Each book contains a brief biographical sketch of the artist and superb reproductions of his best-known work.

Distributed by Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., N. Y. Price $3.

QUIZZ-ICAL CROSSWORD

By Ted Shane



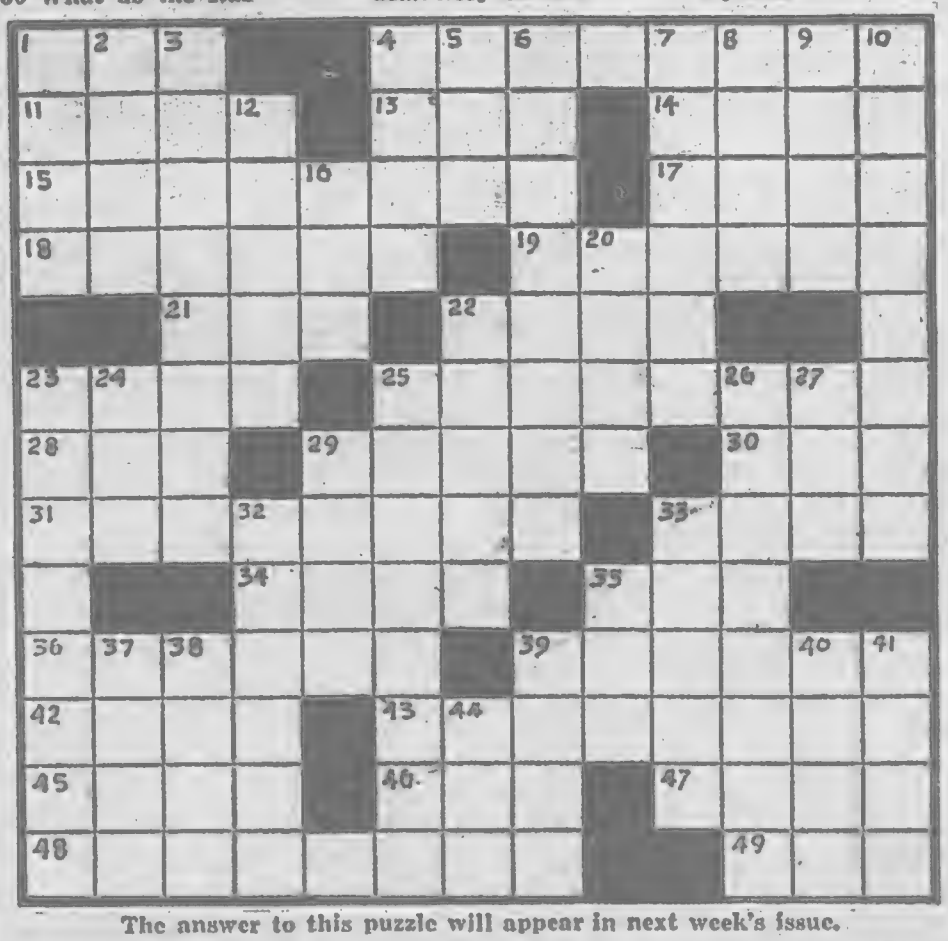
Last week's answer

HORIZONTAL

1 Your what's exactly the same as the animals' you eat?
4 Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl was the theme song of what comedienne?
11 What was the name of composer Borodin's prince?
13 What's the square root of 10201?
14 Nylons
15 Hercules, Bunyan, Tarzan, and Popeye are whats?
17 Superfile
18 In what game is there much talk of love?
19 What's a terrestrial arachnid?
21 What ballplayer, nearing forty, still is the Boy Wonder?
22 Concuss
23 Alcochronics
25 Kiddy chess would be what?
28 Duty paid by tenant (Old Eng. law)
29 Valentino became a sensation in The What?
30 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the what?
31 To be civilized around 400 B.C. in Europe you'd've been a what?
33 Roof
34 Thomas Who is Germany's great living writer?
35 Kind of hat
36 What do the Russians call Krim?
39 What's another name for hell?
42 Canadian Indians, named after chief article of food
43 Those long-haired Scotch purses worn outside the kilt are whats?
45 Alt (var.)
46 If any would not work, neither should he ——
47 What girl's name means grace?
48 What's colloquial for bawds or libidonizers?
49 What makes cough medicine and wagon axle grease?

VERTICAL

1 The clenched what, elevated, is a symbol of oomph?
2 Chills 'n' fever
3 A-1
4 Tarnishes
5 Whales are not born of what?
6 Who wrote the formula for the release of atomic energy?
7 What are $19.75 suits said to do even in a fog?
8 Staggering amount of booze
9 To be in Latin
10 Forcible war indemnitory seizure
12 The OPA fortunately still has a ceiling on whats?
16 Mus. (abbr.)
20 What's Robin Goodfellow's other name?
22 Mr. Gallagher played vocal tennis with Mr. Whom?
23 To cure colds, some folks say to lay off whats?
24 Food for man and beast
25 Graveyard of Jap Navy (two words)
26 What white thing, sacred in the Orient, do we term a costly flop?
27 Redmen Enter India (abbr.)
29 Scotch downfall
32 What word has transformed from it to emets, amets, amts, to ants?
33 A Philippine export
35 Reversed rubbish
37 Who is the female Joe E. Brown?
38 What kind of Cross did F.D.R. award newsman John O'Donnell?
39 Reasons why married people don't go out much evenings
40 Irish prince
41 Try as she might, Catherine the Great could never become what of Russia?
44 Damon to your Pythias



The answer to this puzzle will appear in next week's issue.

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Woman-Talk

BY

MARGARET FISHBACK

HIGH-PRICED WHIMSEY: A spring bonnet was described in a New York department-store advertisement as having "delightful whimsicality," thanks to "the simple dewy beauty of lifelike grapes used unexpectedly." I'd want a whole grape arbor along with the hat for the price asked, *i.e.*, fifty-five smackers.

HEADS UP!—Keep your head up when you read. Reading with the head down is a cause of nearsightedness, especially in children. When the

head hangs, eyeballs are stretched, so that the distance between the retina and the lens is increased.

BROTHERHOOD OF MAN DEPARTMENT: When six-year-old Janet White's parents and four brothers were burned to death in their apartment in Meriden, Connecticut, neighbors took the little girl into their home, and a police-sponsored fund brought her $600 in one day. . . . Fellow workers at a factory in Paducah, Kentucky, raised $2,000 in ninety seconds to purchase a specially built "giant size" iron lung for six-foot-six William Paul Huggins, when infantile paralysis attacked his chest muscles. . . . The civilian crew of the Liberty ship Alfred Moore added its turkey to the soldiers' rations so that the 580 servicemen aboard could have an outsize Christmas dinner when rough weather kept them at sea on December 25. . . . Sixty-one members of the Women's Army Corps have volunteered to go to England to serve on return voyages as nurses to war-bride mothers coming to the United States with their babies.

HELP!—The New York Telephone Company is crying for help. Every day nearly 12,000,000 calls are handled by the city exchanges, the largest load in history. Calls to Information add greatly to the burden. Though naturally the purpose of Information is to give help where numbers are not listed in directories, three out of five requests are for numbers that *are* listed. By keeping Information calls to a minimum, *all* telephone users will get better service. So use your head, chums, and, if necessary, your spectacles.

LINES TO FRIDAY,
G. WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

Hip, hip, hurrah for Feb two two!
An elegant treat for people who
Have Saturday off, for it means three days,
A respite Momma would heartily praise
If she could ever contrive to get
Just *one* day off— but she hasn't yet.
The so-called holidays always are
Her busiest days of all by far.

UNSUNG HEROES: I vote special laurels for the neighborhood druggist who is more concerned over his customers' welfare than his own. When you want drops for Baby's nose, he refuses unless your own pediatrician has prescribed them. The tadpole's nose is more important to him than his cash register. Business isn't just business—business and humanity go hand in hand. He doesn't infringe on the family doctor's territory, but he is a beacon of reassurance when you can't get anything but a busy signal out of your

overworked doctor's telephone. Then the faithful pharmacist persuades you not to worry unduly over a slight cut in Willie's lip, and talks you out of the strong antiseptic you asked for, suggesting instead some harmless remedy such as boric acid. The Goodhue Pharmacy on New York's Murray Hill, displays and lives up to a reverential translation from Maimonides, supplied by Bristol-Myers:

"Inspire me with true love for my art and for thy creatures. O grant that neither greed for gain, nor thirst for fame, nor vain ambition may interfere with my activity. Grant energy unto both body and the soul that I may e'er unhindered ready be to mitigate the woes, sustain and help the rich and poor, the good and bad, enemy and friend. O let me e'er behold in the afflicted and the suffering only the human being."

KNIGHTHOOD MAKES A COMEBACK

Continued from Page 27

For in yonder lofty castle was the faire maid yclept Lisabeth, held in durance by ogres twain who sometimes assumed the guise of doting parents. From afar, the brave Sir Parsifal fancied he saw her seemly face at the casement where she waited succour, weeping and wotting litel that even now her champion drew nigh. . . .

But ful certeinly wolde she be dressed against hys comyng. A bodysed, ful-skirted goune of brocade hadde she, soft as the petalles of a wild rose, and eek of the same hewe, and a petticoate of pale blewe silke embroydered al with silver and with litel pearles. And by the rood, in al the broad land was nonne so gentil, nonne so wonderly wroughte. . . .

So shouted the bold Sir Parsifal above the clattering of his steed, and right well did he dash across a reasonable facsimile of a drawbridge and leap from his trusty charger. And the first thing he saw was a disagreeable reminder that this is the Century of the Very Common Man—a person clad in checked shirt and blue jeans stooping to pull green onions from the garden.

BUT the spell was still strong upon Sir Parsifal. "Ho, varlet!" he cried. "Canst tell me where the faire maid Lisabeth is held against her will?"

The varlet straightened and turned a dirt-smudged face. Five hundred years went by with a rush that blew Sir Parsifal into the prosaic present.

"Why, Lisabeth!" he exclaimed reproachfully. "Not *you!*"

She had started to meet him, but the stricken look on his face puzzled her. She stopped, holding onions in both hands. Her shirttail was out and the jeans looked lived in.

Illusions fled. Lisabeth was leggy and sunburned. She looked flat-chested. And this past year he had pictured her as taller, with the willowy grace of a lady of noble lineage and a skin white as milk. . . .

"Not me what?" she demanded. "This is a fine way to say hello! Aren't you glad to see me?"

Percy wet his lips. "Of course I am," he said weakly. "But it's not like what I thought it would be. I mean, I never expected—"

"Ods bodkins, Lancelot!" interrupted a voice from the swing. "Hast been unhorsed, good knight?"

Percy's cheeks burned. That was Guy O'Higgins. He wore cords and a sweat shirt and sneakers, and sat comfortably on the small of his back, eating an apple. His challenge plainly revealed that Lisabeth had confided in him—she had shared *their* romantic secrets!

Percy meant to thunder, "Hold thy tongue, knave!" But it came out an unchivalrous "You shut up!"

Guy laughed. Lisabeth came un-

smiling to the gate. "You mean I'm not like you expected," she accused. "Go on—finish what you started to say!"

He realized suddenly that she never had understood. She never had felt what he wanted her to feel—that Romance could be recaptured if you played the game—that knight-errants still rode, and fair ladies languished, and wrongs cried to be redressed. And how could he tell her now, when Guy of Higgins, a lout of low degree, could hear?

"Well," he floundered. "I just didn't think *you'd* ever be a bobby-soxer. It's so—so *modern!*"

"I'm not a bobby-soxer!" she cried. "And anyway, what if I were? I'll wear anything I please, and I'll do what I please, and—"

"Of course, Lisabeth," Percy said sorrowfully. "Let's forget it."

"I won't forget it! If you expected to find a slick chick with a trim limb and a sly sigh, you might as well learn right now that I'm not one. And as for that, you don't look like Galahad, either!"

"Slick chick?" Percy moaned. "Heaven forbid!"

"Hey, you two!" Guy protested. "Act your age! You sound like a couple of kids!"

"I'm acting my age," Lisabeth retorted. "Percy's been telling himself fairy tales for a year and trying to feed 'em to me!" She turned on him again. "Yes, and if you think your letters about the First Earl handed me a large charge, you're long wrong! All you wrote about lately was people who've been dead five hundred years!"

"Why," Percy said aghast, "that period—"

"I know, I know! The most romantic in history," she mimicked. "And so what? *I'm* alive today!"

"You don't understand, Lisabeth," Percy said brokenly. He turned away, feeling hollow inside, knowing that he wore a tragic but noble air. *Ful many a knight who loved al in vaine hath left hys faire lady in this manere, I trow. . . .*

"Percy!" Lisabeth called out of the perversity of woman. "Aren't you even coming in for a little while?"

"I guess not. Thanks just the same. I've got things to do."

He cranked his charger and had to mount hastily when it began to move. She had to shout now:

"Well, are you going to the country-club dance Friday?"

"I don't know," answered Sir Parsifal the Disenchanted. "Why should I?"

EVEN if Mrs. Bracy had set a pasty of venison and a stoup of brown ale before him, it is unlikely that Sir Parsifal would have shown an appetite at dinner. The big box—his mother remarked that it looked like a casket—had been put in the garage. He repaired there after a few hasty formalities at table.

Half an hour later Mrs. Bracy, who was wishing Percy's father wasn't

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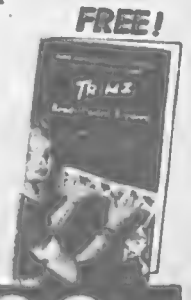

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away on business, ran out to see who had upset the garbage can. She found it still in proper position at the back steps; it was Sir Parsifal who had rolled.

"It's the genouillère!" he explained as he lay on his back and feebly moved arms and legs like a capsized beetle. "That's the knee shields. And the cubitière—the elbow guards. They need oiling."

Mrs. Bracy sighed. "Percy, please donate that—that pile of scrap iron to a museum, and act sensible!"

He rolled over, clanking, and managed to get to his feet. "I'll be all right," he panted. "Takes a little while to get used to it. *Museum?* No, by the rood!"

"Then stand it in the hallway—that is, until your father gets back! Surely you're not going to try to wear it!"

"The First Earl wore it," said Sir Parsifal, toiling up the steps.

The house shook beneath his mailed tread, and he stood before the dressing-room mirror and feasted his eyes on breastplate and gorget, fluted tuille and pallettes—the latter of which, his mother insisted, vulgarly resembled a slightly misplaced brassière. This heresy he ignored. The truth was that the First Earl obviously had been a man of considerable stature. Sir Parsifal had buckled on the armor over sweat shirt and rolled-up slacks, and yet he rattled around a bit inside. But he would have died rather than admit it.

THE whole week was a trial for Mrs. Bracy. Sir Parsifal went nowhere. He emerged from his chelonian habitat only to sleep, or to buff and scour its integral parts with steel wool, metal polish, and the cleaner his mother reserved for the family silver. Lisabeth phoned twice, but Sir Parsifal had on his helmet and couldn't get the receiver to his ear.

"She wants to know if you've decided about going to the country-club dance," Mrs. Bracy relayed.

"Gad!" ejaculated Sir Parsifal. "Swing music and a room filled with idle prating! And I suppose she's going as Miss Teen Age!"

She didn't say. But she explained that, after all, Percy hadn't written that he'd be home in time for the dance—and if he *had*, it was in that crazy medieval English which she could only half translate—and so he couldn't blame her for having made a date ten days ago with Guy O'Higgins.

"Ha!" Sir Parsifal said. "That scullion!"

"Percy!" his mother reproved. "You know very well Guy is one of the nicest boys in town. Well—what shall I tell Lisabeth?"

"Maybe I won't have time. Maybe," he added, "I won't even be here."

But he straightway fell to burnishing the armor anew, and Mrs. Bracy saw him essaying a dance step in front of the dressing-room mirror. Only those normal symptoms prevented her calling Dr. Bost to come over and see for himself.

THE HOME FRONT

"Many's the dream I had about this old job while lying in a fox hole."
LIBERTY

EVEN with oiling, the suit of plate had but little knee action, and it was with difficulty that Percy got the Model T backed out of the garage. But once headed for the country club, it became his trusty charger again, and now he was Sir Parsifal in truth.

Then he remembered what the suit of armor had enabled him to forget all week. Romance was dead. The one person he had counted on didn't understand. Modern customs oppressed him on every hand, and his épaulières had begun to rub a little sore spot on each shoulder.

He dismounted in the darkness of the tree-dotted knoll. The orchestra was blaring It's Gotta Be This or That. Sir Parsifal the Unloved clanked up the steps. Instead of making the triumphant entry he had envisioned, he hesitated on the threshold, blinking at the light that struck through his beaver.

"Why, hello, Percy!" greeted a voice at his elbow. "It's just awfully nice to see you back home!"

He stooped, and twisted his head painfully, and finally saw Jane Watson standing against the wall as if she had been painted there. She was freckled and dumpy and her Dutch costume didn't help. But there was a mutual bond of misery between them, and it began to grow.

Across the floor he saw Guy O'Higgins dressed like Robin Hood, and he felt his lip curl. No originality—no originality at all. Guy was dancing with a fair stranger. Jitterbugging.

"Papa told me about your suit of armor," Jane was saying. "It's certainly beautiful. It's real, isn't it?"

"The First Earl of Bracy wore it," Sir Parsifal said stiffly. The dancers were leaving the floor, scattering toward the terrace and the refreshment stand. Guy O'Higgins and his partner came Sir Parsifal's way, and he saw that the fair damsel was Lisabeth, who was laughing happily.

And then he stared. By the black rood of York, she *was* wearing a bodysed, ful-skirted goune of pale pink brocade!

"Isn't Lisabeth's costume cute?" Jane babbled. "I just think it's the sweetest thing! Her mother got it out of a theatrical costume book. She's an Elizabethan lady. Don't you think it's just cunning?"

"Oh, it's all right, I guess," quoth Sir Parsifal, and saw Lisabeth looking at him. "Dance, Jane?" he asked, holding out his arms.

"Why—I'd love to, Percy! But the music's stopped."

So it had.

"Well, then, let's get a coke!"

THE next dance was a waltz, and the stags were cutting in. Sir Parsifal moved cumbersomely onto the floor and was not quite able to see his partner's face. He stepped on her toes twice, and then a ringing slap fell on his sore shoulder.

He stopped. It was Guy O'Higgins.

"What ho, Lancelot!" he cried. "I am returning good for medieval!"

The fellow always had a shallow wit, Sir Parsifal told himself. But that was Lisabeth coming into his arms, and the magic of high heels made her tall and willowy, and she was as graceful as one of the plumes that nodded atop his helmet.

But Sir Parsifal was not. He strove to move lightly, and his mailed elbow struck yielding flesh, and somebody he couldn't see berated him. He stumbled and almost fell, and the perspiration made his goodly suit of plate seem like a steam cabinet.

"Maybe," Lisabeth suggested, "we ought to sit out this dance. Your armor simply wasn't made for dancing."

"The First Earl must have danced in it!" he retorted, but he knew that was wrong. The First Earl rode a horse in it. A large stanchly built horse. One that could carry a ton. . . .

"Let's sit the rest of it out, Percy."

His broadsword got in the way, and he stepped on her foot, making her cry out. And then Robin Hood's heavy hand drummed on his armored shoulder again, and he sighed and dropped his weighted arms. He saw Guy O'Higgins, agile and free in Lincoln green, wafting the fair Lisabeth away from him. He wondered why he ever had thought she was flat-chested. It must have been that sloppy shirt.

That was what was wrong—the times, the customs, the accident of birth. He, Sir Parsifal of Bracy, was a metachronism. He couldn't play the game alone. He couldn't really play it properly without a horse.

And yonder went the faire maid Lisabeth, laughing happily again, jitterbugging now that the tempo of

the music had changed, with Guy O'Higgins. There was a smirk on Guy's face; a malevolent triumph. Sir Parsifal was suddenly wroth.

He would show Guy who should have the faire lady, who should dance with her—even jitterbug with her! He turned and headed for the floor, moving with the inexorable grace of a Sherman tank, forcing the dancers to fend for themselves against the shock of encounter. Jane Watson had become a wallflower again and she called his name, but he kept going until he was amid the trees of the knoll.

Then he heard a quiet in the clubhouse, and a shout, and Lisabeth was on the terrace calling his name. But he would not be swerved from his purpose—he was going to go home, and leave the armor in the hall, and come back clad for dancing. He cranked the trusty charger that was soon to become only a Model T once more. . . .

It was already a Model T, and the emergency brake didn't hold. The engine clattered, and the brake lever slipped forward, putting the car in gear.

Sir Parsifal felt it moving. He tried to spring to one side and mount as it rolled by, but the armor impeded him. The Model T's brass radiator slammed his breastplate.

"Percy? Where are you?"

He was in the lists, the jousts, the hot shocks of mortal combat. The radiator slammed him again, and bore him backward. He braced his feet and pushed, but his adversary came on, gathering speed. It lifted him from his stance, and bore down the slope toward the nearest tree. . . .

"Percy! You've won first prize for the best costume! Where are you?"

A resounding crash of tin and steel answered her.

"NOW," Dr. Bost said into the telephone, "don't be alarmed, Mrs. Bracy. It's nothing more than a few bruises and cuts. It was fortunate he was wearing the armor. . . . Yes, and I think perhaps he's cured."

The doctor took the phone with him and walked where he could see into the adjoining room. The faire maid Lisabeth, pale and lovely, sat on the sofa beside Sir Parsifal. She was holding his hand. Component parts of the First Earl's suit of plate lay on the table; a fender shop and a little welding would make them as good as old.

Sir Parsifal looked into the eyes of the faire lady.

"You know," Dr. Bost heard him say wonderingly, "you really *are* a slick chick, after all!"

She answered with a sly sigh. Dr. Bost went back to his desk and said into the phone, "Yes, Mrs. Bracy, he's cured. Good night."

Then he cleared his throat loudly and entered the reception room. "Percy," he said, "maybe you can tell me. How does that go about, *'A knight there was, and that a worthy man—'*?"

THE END

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COME OUT SPURRING

Continued from Page 29

And now here we were with boys that could almighty near show *us* some things about riding, and where my blood should have been cooling a little, I was as fluttery about Woody being a champion bronc stomper as I had been myself. But when the announcer blew his whistle all of a sudden, I knew that if he said the wrong thing today I'd have to carry that hankering to the grave with me.

He spieled off a lot of other results just to aggravate me—the calf-roping, bulldogging, and the like—before he said, "Results of the saddle-bronc contest! First prize, the sixty-foot black-dot Manila rope—Woody Griffitts!"

I was too sandbagged to clap. I heard them give second place to Jim Mulloy, and I remember thinking that as cussed as his dad was, Jim had made the kind of ride I like to see: Steady and hard. Woody had ridden like a fool. But he'd been lucky. This time.

AFTER the show there was the usual cow-country joshing behind the chutes. Most of the boys were skinned up, and they were all so dusty you couldn't hardly read the numbers on their brassards. I came over and slapped Woody on the back.

I said, "Nice going, boy," and he grinned through all the dirt.

"Told me to win, didn't you?" he said.

I could have told him that it was more than that—it was how you won, too; but that would keep till later.

And of course Spence Mulloy and his kids, Jim and Fran, were back there too. Jim acted like it was nothing that Woody had won. But I know bronc stompers, if I know anything. And even if he'd contested all over the state, I knew it galled him to lose a local ropin' like this to a kid who had hardly ridden anywhere but in his own home town.

"Looks like the Griffittses have finally got a rider they can brag on," Spence said, with a wink at Woody. That was typical. If a Mulloy beat you matching pennies today, he'd be able to tell you forty years from now whether it was heads or tails.

Jim was trying to look politely bored. "I promised to meet some boys in town, dad. I'll stay over tonight with Bob Bennett."

"Going to be down at Alpine next month?" Woody asked him.

Jim is big and high-colored, with a powerhouse in him. "Ain't sure," he said. "There's a lot of good pro shows on. I may break over into the real competition this year."

"You know damn well you'll make it," Spence rapped. "If you go pro, it'll be after Alpine City. Then you'll know whether or not you're worth your entry fees."

I knew what the bur under Spence's saddle was: Jim was getting cocky. That's curtains for a bronc rider. I wondered, too, whether the liquor on his breath had got there before he rode or after.

Fran put her hand on my arm. "I'm going to borrow Woody for a while tonight, Mr. Griffitts," she told me. "I'll send him home early. Promise!"

"You try!" Woody challenged. "I'm going to stay over and train on about sixteen of your old man's buckwheat cakes."

Fran gave me a smile. "We'll send him home just like we found him," she laughed, and she squeezed my arm.

I watched them walk over to the horses. Fran was wearing a fringed doeskin skirt and a white silk blouse, and her dark hair almost brushed her shoulders. She was clean-legged as a coach horse; too pretty to belong to Spence. I don't mind about her and Woody, only I wished he'd slack off till after the show next month. I guess the wish was there, too, that she hadn't been a Mulloy.

Then Spence said something, as he and I rode along after them, that

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In the United States there is more space where nobody is than where anybody is. This is what makes America what she is.

—Gertrude Stein.

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told me the news about my bet with Morgan was already out. "I hear you're getting rid of your Durham bull, Ray."

"Am I?" I said.

Spence chuckled. "Well, you might as well, as far as that goes. If I had a bull like that in my pasture I'd be getting twenty per cent more for my beef steers than you are inside of two years. You were a good longhorn man, but you don't savvy no more about blooded bulls than you do about trimming hats."

I said, "Oh, yeah?" It wasn't the best comeback in the world, but the thing of it was, there was some truth in what he said. But only to the extent that Spence, while he is the dangedest braggart in the world, is also something of a stock breeder. Later on I thought of the answer: *If you're so good, why wasn't it you that had the money to buy Dusty John instead of me?*

We rode together to their turn-off. My place is farther out, up Tamarack Creek. Out where the good range is. I've got sixty thousand acres of the best cattle range in the Sierras, counting my forest leases, and it's in better shape than I found it a long time ago.

Spence has got a little careless about overstocking and such since his missus died. His range looked pretty tired that afternoon. . . .

It was almost dark when Woody rode in the next day. He looked kind of foggy to me. He had that girl in his head. Maybe I went after him too heavy at dinner; but I was worried. I told him what I thought of his riding yesterday.

"First time you try to clown like that on a real bucker, they're going to sweep you out with the pop bottles. You saw Jim Mulloy make his ride, didn't you?"

Woody gave me that crooked grin. He's sandy-haired and freckled, with tough blond hair there's nothing to do for but cut short. "I saw who won a sixty-foot black-dot rope too," he told me.

"Yes, and you almost blew a stirrup just before the gun, didn't you?"

"I did that to see if your heart's still good."

"Another thing," I went on. "If you want to go on to Pendleton and Cheyenne some day, you're going to have to cut out these house parties."

He threw his fork down and stood up. "I don't know why it's so damned important that I ride pro, anyway," he snapped. "I ride for the fun—that's all."

"You ain't afraid of the competition, are you?" I demanded. "Because if you aren't, you'll have to hit the ball or you'll never go up on the real buckers."

He went out. It made me mad. Especially since I couldn't explain to him why a man who's a champion at one thing will likely be a champion at another, like raising cows.

But maybe I was kidding myself. Maybe the real reason Woody Griffitts had to be a top bronc stomper was that his old man hadn't been.

I NEVER saw the town that could smear the bear grease in its hair and pull on the red silk shirt like Alpine City. When Woody and I pulled in that afternoon before the three-day show started, there were banners across the main street and all the eating houses and bars were jammed. We camped under the pines north of town.

It was cold that night, for all it was early June. Next morning we went out to the field.

Woody got his brassard and paid his fees. We passed Jim Mulloy. Jim winked, said, "How you doin', boy?" and went on. He was with two professional riders I'd seen at Salinas. Jim was making plans.

I sat with Spence and Fran while the first-day events got under way. I watched to see who Fran would cheer for, but she cheered for both. Woody made what I'd call the best ride, though day points finally went to a kid from the Calaveras country named Dewey Keeler, and the damned fools gave Jim Mulloy second. That put Woody back to third.

But the next afternoon things got hot. Jim made a fine ride on a black stud. And when Woody came out on that sunfisher called Big Henry, everybody in the stands came up on their feet.

The bronc slammed out of the chute fast, going up high and coming down hard. Up he went again, twist-

ing his head one way and his rump the other, like he was trying to get a tan on his belly. He shook all over; he tried to bite the kid's knee. All that was bad enough, but the way Woody made his ride . . .!

It wasn't enough to contest the brute—raking him from the shoulder the first three jumps out of the chute, and after that—hang on! He had to howl like a timber wolf and spur the livin' hell out of the horse! If his hat had so much as touched the critter, the show would have been over for him.

I knew the starter's watch had broke. But eventually the gun popped and the flankers came in. Woody got a whale of a hand. But I kept thinking of how it would have been if his hat *had* touched the bronc. Suddenly I knew how much this thing meant to me. Not just for Woody, either. If I lost Dusty John, I'd raise second-rate stock the rest of my life.

I had the second day's results written out on my program. The judges agreed with me. Woody topped them, Jim pulled another second, and Dewey Keeler rode third. That cut the list down close. Just the best of the crowd would ride in the finals tomorrow.

I ran into Morgan in the crowd. "I'll want a quit claim on that land, Morg," I grinned at him. "And don't try to move all the topsoil off."

He gave me a smile with a cigar in the corner of it. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I was thinking of putting it under fence this summer. A bull like that deserves care. By the way," he added, "that was a nice ride of Woody's—for the preliminaries. Tell him I said so, will you? In case he isn't here after the show tomorrow—"

Woody went in town with Fran for dinner. I walked over to the creek and cooked supper. Then I smoked and watched the sun go down.

I walked down to the stock pens. The air tasted cold and clean. In my mind I felt almost easy. I was sure Woody would have the sense, now, to make a sober ride tomorrow and hold onto his points.

It was dark down there. If there'd been any light at all, I wouldn't have stumbled on Woody and Spence that way, and then God knows how the show would have gone.

THEY were hunkered down beside the calf pen. I could hear Spence talking, though I couldn't tell one from another. "I'm not saying it was a bad ride," Spence was saying. "It was a damn good ride. But it was a second-day ride."

"What do you mean by that?" Woody demanded.

"I mean there's three of you that'll be slugging it out in the finals. You ought to all ride to the gun. So who gets the nod? The boy that sticks in the judges' minds! The one that yelled the loudest and scratched the most!"

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"I did everything but hit him with an ax."

"Sure you did—all the old tricks in the book. Try something they don't see every day. Come out with your heels in and your toes out—and yell! Throw your hat at the stands and circle-saw him!"

I saw the whole dirty plot then. There isn't one rider in forty who can circle-saw a good bucker—and Spence Mulloy knew it.

I went up and stood there, and they both got up, slow. "Well, this is purty!" I said.

Spence didn't answer for a minute. Then he asked, "What's the trouble, Ray?"

I wanted to kill the old hypocrite. "All that stuff you're feeding Woody!" I choked. "What do you call it—'How to lose your saddle in one easy lesson'?"

Spence said, "I'm just trying to help, Ray." But Woody spoke up sharp:

"Now, look, dad—Spence has done some riding, too, and what he's got to say—"

"Will lose you the show! That's why he's ribbing you up to it. There's not a stomper in the county can get away with it."

"I did," Spence told me.

I WAS glad he'd said it. It let down some bars that had been up too long. I said, "Sure. On a straight-away bucker you could have done hand stands on. If you'd drawn a sunfisher like I did—"

"For Lord's sake, Ray!" Spence exploded. "Are you still rankling over that saddle I took away from you?"

"And I suppose you've forgotten it!" I came back.

"I should think things were evened up by now," Spence said. "It's me that won the saddle, but look where we're standing today. That is, if you figure success by the acre."

"However I figure it," I said, "I'm telling you to keep your coaching for your own kid."

What he said then, or the way he said it, was sort of odd. "Jim doesn't want my coaching, Ray. Not in anything."

Woody pulled his hat down on his forehead. "I'll let you two wrangle it out. All I know is, when the gate swings open tomorrow I'll come out spurring."

He disappeared toward town. I went the other way.

I guess I sat up until three or four that night, waiting for Woody to come back. Out there in the woods it was lonesome and still. I kept a fire going, just enough to sort of guide him back. But he didn't come back. I was a sick cowpuncher when I crawled into my sleeping bag.

About nine the next morning I made myself a pot of coffee, and who should come up while I was drinking it but Fran. I couldn't be easy with her, for the things I'd been thinking. I'd been wondering how much she had to do with Woody's being out all night. Fran was a fine girl. I knew that, and yet my feelings were pretty well muddled up.

She sat down on a log by the fire. Either the fire or what she was thinking made her cheeks pink; her eyes had the soft shine of a brook in the sunlight.

"Mr. Griffitts—" she said; and when she paused, I knew. I knew without her holding out her hand to show me the silver horseshoe ring on her third finger, the one I'd made for Woody years ago. "Wish me luck, dad!" she said.

I did. I could have been sorrier; a long while back I'd known it was coming. But of course it was all up with Woody. And it was all up with me and Dusty John.

"We decided there wasn't any use waiting," she was saying. "We've had the license for months."

"Is he going to ride today?" I asked her.

"Of course he's going to ride! Today, and as long as he wants, and wherever he wants. Then we'll come back to Tamarack."

Well, let them dream, I thought. They only have that kind of dream once.

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PUNCH LINES

A conservative is a man who does not think that anything should be done for the first time.

—Frank Vanderlip.

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I got through the first rides pretty well that last day. Woody showed up a lot better than I'd expected for a new groom. But when they went into the finals, with only him and Jim Mulloy, this Keeler boy and another kid named Ross, I had to sneak down and have a shot.

Dewey Keeler's last ride wasn't up to his others. He'd tensed up. Then I heard the announcer bawling, "Watch Chute Six, folks—Jim Mulloy coming out on Skipper!"

The bronc came out pitching hard and shaking his head. Then he stopped and bucked on a dime. He pitched about four times, and every time Jim's neck snapped a little harder. Then he bucked straight for the fence. At the last second he stopped and buried his head. Jim stuck, but he didn't have any margin. I thought of a man—any man!—trying to circle-saw *that* critter!

The gun went off and saved Jim. But it'd been a money ride. It was the ride to beat for the California championship—

WOODY got his chance a few minutes later. I climbed the chutes to watch him get set. He drew a line-backed dun, hammerheaded and ugly, big and strong as hell. They called him Geronimo. Every second it looked like Woody was set; then this brute would rear up and paw at the handlers and they'd start all over again.

At last the kid found his stirrups and got hold of the fat cotton bucking rein. I heard him yell, "Let 'im out—I got 'im!" and out they went.

Geronimo was one of those broncs that are born with a natural hatred of man. Years of being ridden hadn't improved his temper any. He was mean. He went busting out in front of the stands, squealing. He reared straight up. I was sure he was going into a dogfall.

And Woody, the crazy fool, began to circle-saw him!

He raked him and he yelled. He threw his hat at the judges' stand. His spurs rattled from one end of Geronimo's yellow hide to the other. If ever a bronc didn't need circle-sawing! I think that horse was just plain startled. He looked back at Woody, and then his hind legs bunched and he kind of flew apart.

I don't know how much you savvy about riding, but when you circle-saw a horse the idea is for your left foot to be spurring him in the shoulder at the same time your right one is gaffing him aft. It's like riding a bicycle, with the chance of being killed. That's what Woody was doing, along with hollering at Geronimo to show some fight.

Everybody in the stands was on his feet, yelling. Geronimo went right through the catalogue, from crow-hop to sunfish. Sometime during the fracas the gun went off and the flankers came in, but either Woody didn't see them or he was liking it. He stayed up there a good half minute. I had a feeling it was Geronimo's last fight. He'd met General Crook this time.

THE judges, of course, couldn't do anything but give Woody Griffitts that saddle. I saw Jim Mulloy ride away before the results were announced. I don't think he was heading for Cheyenne, either.

I walked back to our camp. It was quiet down there. I could think. Yesterday I'd thought that if Woody won, they could bury me alive right in the arena and I wouldn't murmur. But Spence Mulloy, damn him, had his fingers even in my boy winning, because Woody had done just what he told him to—and got away with it!

Someway or other I'd missed Morgan at the grounds. But after I'd reached camp, Spence Mulloy came by. He handed me an envelope. "Morg asked me to give you this," he grinned. "I hear you've come by a little acreage, Ray."

"A little," I said. I was glad to see Woody coming through the trees, lugging the saddle he'd won. After all, he was a Griffitts—and it was my chance, at last, to put the big britches on Spence.

Woody was grinning. "How'm I doing?" he asked.

I shook his hand hard. Then I looked at Spence. "No hard feelings?" I said.

"What about?" Spence asked me. "I meant it when I said I was coaching him to win."

I couldn't be a hypocrite. I said what I had to. "He rode your style, dammit, and he won. It was the only way he *could* have beaten Jim's ride."

"Well, I'll tell you," Woody drawled. "When I left the chutes I didn't know what I was going to do. I sort of left it to the horse. You've got to do that, I figure—suit the style to the horse. After he started rearing, I said, 'O.K., hoss, if that's how you want it!' Because I could see it was the only way to ride his kind. And it worked!"

I dug a bottle out of my gear that I'd brought along. The stuff was fifteen years old. I thought of that "You've got to suit the style to the horse." If he'd drawn another horse, maybe he'd have made my kind of ride. Maybe. Well, it was a lie, of course, but it was a grand one.

Woody wouldn't wait for a drink. "Got a bride waitin' for me," he said. "I'll see you in a couple of weeks, fellers."

"Want to go on to Salinas?" I asked. "I'll put up the entry fees."

Woody shook his head. "Guess I'm just an old cow hand, dad. Is that parcel up Tamarack Creek still mine on easy payments when I bring home a bride?"

"I'll order the lumber and find a carpenter," I said.

I FELT freer with Spence than I had any time since Alpine City. But I had to know. I asked him how come he'd backed my boy against his.

Spence stared gloomily into his whisky. "Sometimes," he said, "losing is better for a man than winning. Jim needs some bumps. I hope he gets them. I wish I'd got mine sooner. I was shore an honest-to-God man, wasn't I? I didn't want the hard work of being a rodeo rider—just the fun. After it wore off, I was about three years behind you, and it was another five before I settled down to work. That's why I'm running a beer-check outfit like I am now."

I thought pretty hard before I said what I did.

"You and me," I said, "are a couple of lone wolves, Spence. We're a little old for howling on winter nights, too. Why don't you sell that cactus patch of yours and buy in with me? Maybe you could do a little with that Durham cross I've been fooling with."

Spence sawed at his whisker stubble with his thumb. "God knows," he said, "your herd could stand some work. With that Dusty John, you ought to have the best herd in Sierra County, but you ain't. Sure," he said; "I'll help you out."

Which was a funny way to put it, unless you know Spence. Of course there isn't a better man with stock in the Sierra Nevadas. We're selling our herd bulls as far away as Australia now. And as long as we stay off bronc riding, why, we get along fine.

THE END

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HATEFUL ROMANCE

Continued from Page 24

rest and it was black dark when he arrived with the body at the house.

Frau Winter was in the parlor. Her plump hands were clenched tight.

Morgan said, "Where will I put him—that's safe?"

She hesitated. "Would the cellar be all right?"

"Can you lock it?"

She nodded. The two of them carried the body down the stairs and dumped it on the cold basement floor. Then Morgan watched the woman lock the heavy door.

"Give me the key."

Frau Winter handed it to him and he slipped it in his pocket. He followed her up to the parlor. "I'll need another bandage. My leg is bleeding again."

While he was applying the clean dressing, Frau Winter returned to the kitchen and presently reappeared with a bowl of lentil soup. He finished it hurriedly, not looking at the woman; looking only at the couch.

"I'm going to sleep," he said.

When she was gone he picked up the radio and carried it down to the basement, where he hid it behind some barrels, then carefully locked the door before pulling himself up the stairs.

Only then did he lie down on the couch. Maybe somebody would murder him there. Morgan didn't care. Sleeping was as good a way to get it as any.

WHEN he awoke, it was daylight. He was no longer in the parlor. Turning his head, he saw a heavy old-fashioned screen and beyond it the foot of a bed. The women were tending someone, and it could only be Elsa.

Morgan was shocked. These damned Germans. They had no moral sense and they had no manners. He raised himself on one elbow, saw his clothes hanging at the foot of his bed, his carbine leaning against it. Then he saw Frau Ollendorf appear from behind the screen, reaching for an unopened American first-aid packet lying on a small table. Abruptly Morgan reddened with anger.

"Give me that packet!"

Frau Ollendorf jumped, her face white and frightened. As she moved gingerly toward his bed he snatched the packet from her.

"You robbed the body of an American soldier, damn you! Who was it—my driver?"

She nodded. "But he was dead. You must understand. Elsa and you—you two are alive! I have no drugs—nothing. And infection is the only danger."

Frau Winter came up. "You brought Elsa to the house," she said, as if that made the rest obvious.

It did. There was no point in lugging Elsa all those painful steps only to leave her open to infection now. Besides, for all the liberties they had taken with him, these women had jumped fast enough at his command. Evidently to them he was still the conqueror. They had restored the tablets to him; they were now his to keep or give away.

"Take them," he said.

"Half are for you."

"To hell with them. I can get well without 'em."

Frau Winter brought him another bowl of lentil soup and a tiny glass of schnapps. As she propped him up with a second pillow, her plump fingers were gentle as a breath.

When the women had gone and he was sure that Elsa was asleep, he ventured out of bed and put on his clothes. The wound in his calf had been professionally bandaged, but his knee was swollen horribly and he couldn't bend it far enough to put a sock or boot on. Yet he had to dress as best he could. Perhaps the jeep had gone unnoticed in the darkness, but now that it was light it was sure to be discovered.

"GOOD morning." It was Elsa. He started slightly. "Good morning," he said finally.

"How did you learn German?"

"That again!"

"You are married maybe?" she persisted. "You have a German wife in America and she taught you the language?"

Morgan almost grinned. "No, I haven't a German wife."

Elsa smiled faintly.

"In Africa—in Italy—in France," Morgan said maliciously, "they all ask that question in different ways. Most of 'em ask it better."

"Germans are not subtle."

Morgan's jaw hardened. "No, Germans are not subtle."

He picked up his helmet liner, but before he could go she spoke again: "You hate us very much, don't you?"

Morgan put the liner on. "I don't suppose I hated you very much during the war. I never saw any atrocities, and naturally I expected the enemy to shoot back. But now—since last night—I hate Germans."

"But I am a German and you helped me. Was it because I am a girl?"

"How should I know? Maybe. You German girls all expect us to be suckers for you. Maybe we are." He walked over to her bed. "I know damned well what you're after. You want me to tell you that you're pretty. O.K. You are."

Elsa smiled. "I didn't think you hated me."

Morgan's voice was harsh. "Don't fool yourself. Some snakes are pretty, but I don't like 'em."

He hobbled out, clenching his teeth against the pain.

"I won't see you again," she said, and there were tears in her voice.

"No," Morgan said. "You won't see me again."

Frau Winter met him in the parlor. She seemed genuinely perturbed at finding him dressed. "But," she protested, "you cannot walk, and there is not an automobile nor a car in the district."

"I won't have to walk. There'll be Americans passing here any minute. I'm going outside to wait." Then, pausing at the door, "Why did you put me in with *her* last night?"

Frau Winter seemed surprised. "Frau Ollendorf and I took turns staying up, and it was easier to nurse you both together."

HE hobbled to the gate and turned down the highway. Suddenly he stopped dead. The jeep was not there. It was incredible, but the jeep was not there. There was a trace of rust-colored mud where the radiator had leaked, a puddle of oil, and that was all. Smitty's body was gone. Whoever had ambushed him must have spirited them away, and the Werewolves would never allow him to sit there and give the game away by hailing a truck.

Morgan glared down at his bad leg. He could never make the two miles to town, nor was the place big enough to boast even a Military Government detachment. It was nearly ten miles to battalion headquarters, and ten miles was the distance to the moon.

He started back to the house, keeping close to the wall, conscious of that peculiar sensation in the small of his back that you feel when snipers are about.

The door of the house was unlocked. Morgan opened it and hobbled through the deserted parlor and kitchen to the cellar door. The lock was broken and the door was open. The body of the German youth was gone. But the radio, apparently undiscovered, was still there.

He dragged his leg up the steps and hurried to Elsa's room. She stared at him in wordless surprise.

"Where is your mother?"

"Working in the field. We have no help since the Poles ran away."

"Did you know the jeep had been moved?"

Elsa's eyes widened. "No." Suddenly she said, "You won't be leaving now." Her voice was pleased.

He watched her eyes. "The body of the man I killed is gone too."

"You killed someone?"

"Didn't you know?"

"No. I remember so little. I remember waving to you on the road and then I remember the shots." She paused, looking at him. "I remember waking up by the gate. Then you looked down at me and I was afraid. I'll never be afraid of you again."

He started to speak, but she interrupted him: "That annoys you, doesn't it?"

"Yes." His voice was hoarse. "It annoys the living hell out of me. You Germans are convinced in spite of all you've done to us—to everybody—that we're still your friends. We helped you after the last war and you think we'll do the same thing this time!"

"No." She was very earnest. "I

don't think that. I don't know anything about the last war—I wasn't born in the last war." For the first time she showed anger. "But I know about this war. I know who our enemies are."

Morgan stood up. Elsa bit her lip as she saw him leaving. "John—"

"How did you know my name?"

She seemed pleased at his surprise. "I didn't until after you'd gone. Then mother told me that last night—"

His lips tightened. "My wallet?"

She laughed. "Yes. There was a letter—"

"Wait," he interrupted. "Your mother reads English?"

Elsa shook her head. "Frau Ollendorf does. Your mother was German. She hoped you could visit the town near Coblenz where she was born. She hoped you could look up—"

Morgan's tired face was stony. "So that's why you're not afraid of me," he said. "Because I'm half German. But I'm not. I'm not half anything. I'm an American.'"

"No." She was serious again, and her eyes were tender. "I'm not afraid of you simply because you're you."

"Don't be a fool." Morgan's voice was not as harsh as he had intended it to be. Elsa had been pretty when she was pale; she was even prettier now that the color was coming back into her cheeks and her lips. It was time he was getting out of here. She annoyed him, but he had a feeling that she didn't annoy him enough.

"John—"

"What?"

"How did your father happen to marry a German girl?"

HE rubbed his bristly chin and glared at her. "He was a soldier in the last war," Morgan said finally. "Afterward he was in the Army of Occupation at Coblenz."

"Oh," she said. Her voice was low.

"But after the last war," Morgan went on fiercely, "German civilians weren't ambushing jeeps and murdering soldiers in cold blood. Germans hadn't grown fat—like your mother—while the rest of Europe starved. Look at you! You were shot yesterday and today you can laugh."

"Stop!" She was angry now. "That isn't fair. It isn't fair to condemn us because we're efficient."

"Sure, you're efficient. Ask 'em at Buchenwald and Dachau!"

"You shouldn't speak that way to me," she said plaintively. "I know nothing about such things. The war is over and I'm your friend—a better friend than you know."

"O.K.," Morgan said. "You're my friend."

He went out of the room and down to the basement. The radio was a forlorn hope at best. If he could put it in working order, and if conditions were right, he might get through to his unit command post. Morgan carried the set up to the parlor and started to work. He was hard at it when he heard a step behind him. He whirled.

"Elsa!"

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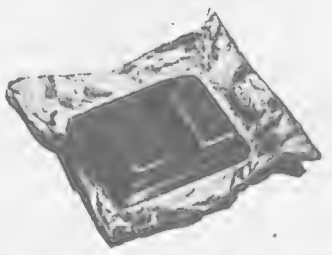

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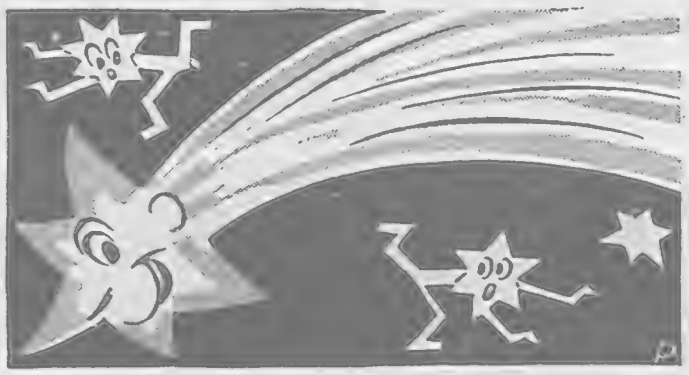

COLONEL STOOPNAGLE'S FICTIONARY

FAY-RY-TAIL: The story of Harvey's appendage.

MISTYMEANOR: To behave badly in the fog.

TRANQUILL: Silent as a feather.

SDUDE: A fop in a fuddle.

JOHNDICE: Yellowjack.

LUNGTH: The length of your lung.

MISSAGE: Sent from one maiden to another.

ORI-GIN: Juniper berries.

SLICKSTEEN: Youthful smoothy.

NIGHTROGEN: Evening air.

She was standing erect with a desperate firmness and she looked pale again, but her lips were smiling. "So you do know my name."

Morgan stared at her. Her robe was warm and practical and unlovely, but its light blue set off her blondeness and it clung to her figure in a most unpractical way.

"I wouldn't have wasted my sulfa tablets on you," he said ungraciously, "if I'd known you weren't going to give them a chance."

She sat down on the couch. "My wound's no worse than yours—Frau Ollendorf said it wasn't—and you're up."

"I've got things to do."

"All right," she sniffed. "Do them."

He turned back to the radio. She watched him and, like a kid sister, made uncomplimentary remarks on his awkwardness. At last she made him laugh, and then she pounced:

"John, why do you pick fights with me all the time?"

He didn't answer.

"American soldiers and German girls are talking to each other everywhere. They don't talk about the war and politics."

Morgan wrestled the last wire into place. He watched for the tubes to light up. They didn't. Disgustedly he turned to her.

"O.K. You think I pick fights because I'm afraid of you. You think I must be susceptible because my father set me an example. If you want to figure it that way, go ahead."

"Who aid I wanted you to be susceptible?"

He stared at her. "Don't you?"

"Yes."

Morgan kissed her. It was as pleasant as he had expected it would be. He forgot the radio; he even forgot Smitty. When he pulled back she was smiling.

"You see, John, I don't have to pretend any pride. That's one advantage of being conquered." She grew serious, her eyes on the radio. "You're anxious to leave, aren't you? Why? You are wounded—your superiors will understand."

He shrugged. "I'm not stupid enough to think that whoever did the wounding isn't anxious to finish the job."

Her eyes were wide. "But those men, they wouldn't stay here. They're probably miles away by now."

"They stuck around long enough to grab that body before I could get it identified."

"Then there was certainly no reason for them to stay."

"Maybe."

He began to tinker with the radio again. Suddenly, as he inadvertently jarred the case, a red gleam appeared in the tubes. Morgan quickly began to call into the transmitter:

"Morgan calling Olympic—Morgan calling Olympic—message for you—"

The front door opened and Frau Ollendorf appeared. She frowned and took a quick step toward Elsa. Elsa stopped her with a gesture.

Morgan kept calling for at least ten minutes. Then abruptly he pressed the earphone close to his ear and cautioned the women: "Be quiet. I think I've got something."

Again: "Morgan calling Olympic. Over." He listened, then repeated: "Morgan. Lieutenant John Morgan. Message for you—"

The message was brief. Morgan gave his location, using a code name for the near-by hamlet, then outlined his situation. After listening tensely for a couple of minutes he switched off the radio.

"They'll be here in less than an hour."

He saw Elsa's lips tighten. Frau Ollendorf gripped the girl's shoulder. "Come, Elsa, you have been up far too long."

Listlessly Elsa turned away with the nurse's arm supporting her.

Morgan sat down with his carbine across his knees. Presently Frau Ollendorf reappeared from the bedroom.

"Frau Winter will be in from the field soon. She will fix you some soup if your friends haven't come by then."

Morgan nodded. Frau Ollendorf walked out the front door. Morgan took one of his last cigarettes from the pack and lighted it.

"John!" It was Elsa.

Painfully he stumped into the bedroom. Elsa's face was strained.

"Talk to me, John."

"I should be out in front where they can see me."

"Oh, they'll find you. Stay with me, John." Her voice was urgent. "Tell me what America is like. Tell me about the gangsters."

"That's Nazi talk."

"Then tell me about the girls and the beautiful clothes and the automobiles."

He smiled thinly. "The girl I used to go with worked in a five-and-dime and bought her dresses for fourteen ninety-five. As for automobiles, I owned a piece of a 1936 Ford—the finance company owned the rest of it."

Some of the tenseness left her face as she smiled. "I'm glad. I didn't want you to be rich."

"I did."

"Oh, you will be some day."

"Sure." Absently he took a grenade from the pocket of his jacket and toyed with it as if it were a watch.

Elsa stared at the grenade. "John, I want to go to America."

"You should have done that six years ago."

"I didn't want to then. I didn't want to until I met you, John."

"Thanks. But I don't make the rules, Elsa."

HE glanced at his watch. It was twenty minutes since he had switched off the radio.

"But the rules will be different some day, John."

"Maybe." He thought he heard a footstep somewhere. He glanced at the two windows. One was open. Then he heard a creaking board.

Elsa had heard it, too. She called, "Mother—"

There was no answer. Still clutching the grenade, Morgan moved awkwardly but swiftly near the wall, close to the door and away from the windows. At that instant a man's head and one side of his body appeared in the doorway. Morgan fired with the carbine halfway to his shoulder. There was a brief splutter of shots from a machine pistol and then the man was writhing on the floor with the gun beneath him.

Forgetting his wound, Morgan jumped over the body to the doorway. There was another man there. Morgan ducked back as a bullet smacked into the doorjamb; then he

lifted the grenade to his teeth, pulled the pin, and tossed the grenade into the hallway.

"Duck!" he yelled to Elsa.

There was an explosion in the hall. Morgan rushed through the door. The man was dead. He was very young. Morgan glanced into the parlor; there was no one there.

He returned to Elsa's bedroom. He made the mistake of not taking a look before he entered, but it made no difference. A third German youth was hanging half inside the room, caught by a bullet as he was climbing through the window.

Morgan's gaze swung toward Elsa. She was sitting up in bed with a Luger pistol in her hand. The fierceness in her face startled him.

"He tried to shoot you, John—just as the grenade went off."

Morgan looked at the pistol. Elsa said, "I had it under the covers."

"All the time?"

"Yes."

Morgan pulled the body of the German through the window. But his eyes never left Elsa's face. "Is this all of them?"

"I—I don't know."

"Is this all of them, Elsa?"

"Yes."

FROM where he stood by the window, Morgan could see Frau Winter hurrying toward the house. He turned back to Elsa.

"You waved Smitty and me down on purpose, didn't you? So we'd be going so slowly these kids couldn't miss. Answer me."

"No. No, I didn't.

"Tell me the truth."

"I love you, John.

He disregarded the words and the tone.. "How did these punks know I'd gotten a message through and help was coming?"

"Frau Ollendorf told them."

"Why didn't they shoot me when I was carrying you to the house? Or when I went back for the radio?"

"Carl—the one you killed—he was the leader. The others got scared and ran away."

"Then you do know them. You were the decoy, weren't you?"

"Yes." The word was almost a sigh.

"How do you know they got scared?"

Her voice was so low that he could barely hear her. "They told Frau Ollendorf last night when they came to get Carl's body."

"And they didn't find me because I was in your bedroom, is that it?"

"Yes. I made mother and Frau Ollendorff bring you in here."

"After helping to ambush me, why did you do that?"

"Because—I don't know—because you were you." She was crying.

"Did you know Frau Ollendorf was going to tip them off just now?"

"I don't know—I wasn't sure—I knew she was growing more and more afraid of you. I knew she thought she had been foolish in helping to hide you last night."

"But you didn't warn me."

"I wasn't sure."

They heard Frau Winter's scream in the hall. Morgan went to the door, saw her automatically stamping out a smoldering spot ignited by the grenade while her eyes remained foolishly fixed on the body of the German boy.

"Stay there for a minute," Morgan ordered. He went back to Elsa. 'Don't worry about what the authorities will do to you," he said. "I won't tell them about the decoy business, and even if they tumble to it, they'll remember you saved my life twice."

She blinked away the moisture in her eyes and Morgan saw a soft, shy expectancy there. "Then—?"

He sat on the edge of the bed again. The Luger was still resting in her hand, forgotten. Gently he took it from her fingers.

"I love you, Elsa," he said slowly. "I've been falling in love with you ever since I carried you in here—even though I was suspicious then." He stopped, his breathing uneven. "But I'm not going to marry you—even if I could. I'm not going to see you again. You're still a Nazi, Elsa—or you were until last night. The only thing that's changed you is me, and I'm not enough." His glance ran around the room and steadied on the body of the German youth under the window. "Either you were wrong yesterday—or you were wrong today when you killed a friend to save me. There is something in you that I could never understand—and that I don't want my children to understand."

He bent and kissed her. Her arms tightened around his neck.

Frau Ollendorf was standing beside Frau Winter when he came out of the room. There was fear in their faces. Morgan cleared his throat before he spoke: "Don't move these bodies out of the house."

Then, leaning on his carbine, he gestured to Frau Ollendorf with the Luger in his other hand. "Come on. You're going with me."

They walked through the gate. "You might as well sit down," Morgan said. "We'll have to wait until some vehicle comes along."

"But I thought—"

Morgan shook his head. "The damned radio never did work. I faked the message. I thought your friends would be coming for me again, and I wanted 'em to come in daylight."

He saw the quick flash of hatred in Frau Ollendorf's eyes, but it made no impression on him. His mind was on Elsa, lying there in her bed and crying, and there was a tight feeling in his chest.

It was a hell of an ending, Morgan was thinking, but he knew there would be a lot of lousy endings in Europe this year. He glanced up the *autobahn* and saw an American truck coming.

Morgan lit his last cigarette. "Get up," he said to Frau Ollendorf.

THE END

Advertisement

"Wheaties! Wheaties! Wheaties! Won't I ever get a chance to cook something?"

No cooking! No waiting! No bother! . . . when you serve Wheaties. Just shake those crisp-toasted flakes in a bowl. Add milk and fruit. It's that easy.

Wheaties come ready-to-serve. And you come ready-to-eat — when you sample the whole wheat flakes with the famous "second helping" flavor.

CONTINUING the Bulletin Board's insurance discussion of last week, here are a few money-saving tips.

Any veteran holding National Service Life Insurance who has been hospitalized or has been too ill to work for a period of six months or more may apply to the Veterans Administration on Form 357 for a *waiver of premiums.* Even if the six months or more of hospitalization took place while you were in the service, your deductions will be re-

It's June!

funded for the entire period you spent in the hospital—provided you make proper application. As soon as the V.A. sends you a statement of entitlement to a waiver, you can stop paying your premiums until you are officially informed of the termination of the waiver.

The totally disabled even may convert their term insurance into any form they wish (the 20-Payment Life being recommended) and still keep the waiver in force.

Max Schreibstein, the insurance representative of the Veterans Administration in New York City, reminds veterans with a loss of earning power to investigate whether or not they are eligible for a waiver. He tells us that many veterans are unaware of this money-saving benefit. Apparently all the veteran need do is *prove* that he is unable, because of some disability, to follow a gainful, substantial occupation. If approved, the government pays the premiums for him until he is able to pay once more.

Moreover, the disability may be other than service-incurred—and it covers any disabling impairment, not only of body but of mind.

John Pennington of Buffalo, New York, a commercial insurance expert, adds a surprising discovery that should be of special interest to convalescing G.I.s. He points out that these patients, if they are slated to remain hospitalized for more than a few months, should immediately convert their term insurance into permanent insurance (preferably the 20-Payment Life). In this way their new high monthly premiums will be paid off by the government and accredited to the applicant's policy value. When dismissed from the hospital, the vet finds his premiums are all paid up to date and that a very substantial cash value has been accumulated to his credit.

National Service Life Insurance is so full of helpful stipulations that only individual investigation can dig out all the facts under such provisions as: right of beneficiary where the insured dies without securing waiver; right to free insurance for persons disabled between October 8, 1940, and April 20, 1942; right to free insurance for persons captured in the early stages of World War II.

But remember! In the absence of authorized waivers or the like, we must, as civilians, send in our premium payments regularly. Don't wait for a notice. Should the policy lapse, then as soon as possible try to reinstate it under the new liberal regulations. Only in this way will you be able to preserve this preferred insurance policy and save yourselves the risk and trouble of going through a complete physical examination before you can renew your policy.

* * *

T/5 Walter Roberts, APO 244, San Francisco, Calif. Generally, there just isn't enough time for us to dig out pin-ups for you fellows—but I know what it's like to lie months on end in an overseas hospital and gnaw your fingernails. The "casual" picture of June Allyson is on its way to you, due to the fact that the publisher of Liberty also publishes movie magazines, and I had my pick of the files. Hope you like my choice of pose, corporal!

VETERANS! The Bulletin Board is your department, the watchdog of your interests—written and edited by a combat veteran of World War II. Make the most of it! Write in your gripes and your ideas. No names will be used without permission. Address Veterans' Bulletin Board, c/o Liberty, 37 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

LAZYBONES

Continued from Page 15

it was—the middle of the depression. And here was a song that made like people didn't want to work anyway; they just wanted 'to sit in the sun, never getting a day's work done.' It tickled out-of-work America's funny bone, so the song hit."

Johnny's voice and his lyrics were neck and neck in attaining recognition. He went on Benny Goodman's Camel Caravan as vocalist. At the same time And the Angels Sing hit the music stands. This was big-time stuff, and Hollywood pricked up its ears. Johnny arrived in Hollywood as a triple attraction: a song writer, a singer, and an actor. The picture was Old Man Rhythm, and neither Johnny nor it was any good. Queried on how he was as an actor, Johnny replies cryptically, "How bad can you get? I was never in another picture; that's a pretty good answer!"

Asked for details, he explains: "I didn't look the same nor sound the same as I do in real life. I looked more rugged and uglier and I sounded rough and uncouth." Johnny, a pleasant enough looking man in person, has the kind of a face that is made by personality. He's not photogenic, and unless the camera catches him off guard, he looks like six other guys, all with numbers.

SO his picture career was short-lived. But it was another kettle of fish when it came to lyric writing. Every tune writer in the business was suddenly conscious of Mercerized music. Johnny often had four songs at one time on the Hit Parade. He found himself writing with such melody makers as Jerome Kern, Rube Bloom, Harry Warren, Matty Malneck, Vernon Duke, and Harold Arlen, not forgetting that some of his top hits were in collaboration with Hoagy Carmichael. His versatility threw him with the novelty tunesmiths as well as the ballad boys. His G.I. Jive, Pardon My Southern Accent, Ac-cent-tchu-ate, and Atchison were just as big hits, for instance, as ballads like I Remember You, Skylark, and Dream. Not that Johnny is perfect. In 1939 he wrote a musical comedy with Hoagy Carmichael called, I Walked with Music. "It walked about a week," says Johnny.

As to what type song he enjoys writing the most, Johnny kids, "I used to love novelty numbers, just as I used to love to dance. But I'm getting old now, and I go for ballads, just as I go for waltzes these days. Anyway, ballads are more lasting."

Despite such facetiousness, Johnny says "I try to make every song as good as I can. Never cheap." He prefers to have a long time to write a score, but finds he writes better under pressure. With picture commitments scheduled far ahead, this is a good thing, since he has to write under pressure most of the time. "I

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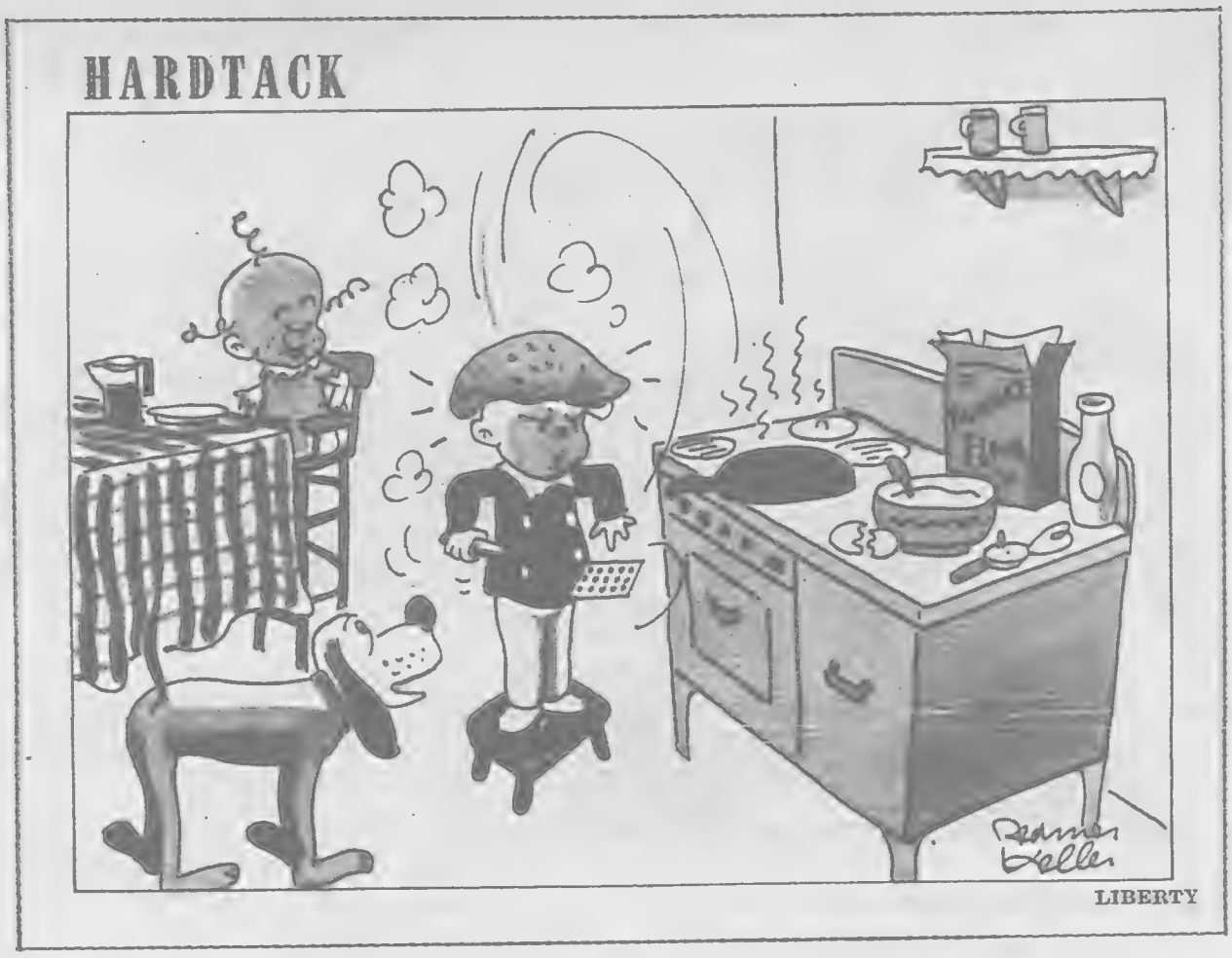
EVEN BEFORE the war, Star Blades revolutionized double edge shaving. Now new millions are enjoying the lift of a lifetime—the *cleaner* shave with longer-lasting, keener Star Blades.

THERE'S A SCIENTIFIC reason for Star's refreshing difference. It's the amazing 6NX Process that makes these blades take edges steel has never taken before. Yet look at the little they cost—ten cents a package! . . . *Star Division, American Safety Razor Corp., Brooklyn 1, N. Y.*



don't mean to sound conceited," says Johnny, "but when people know you and know your work, it's no longer a matter of plugging *them;* it's a matter of their plugging you and you turning them down because you can't take on any more work."

He doesn't believe in writing every day, despite his heavy schedule. On a typical working day Johnny gets up about ten o'clock and cooks his own breakfast. Although he hits the 80-per-cent income-tax bracket, the Mercers live in a small two-bedroom, study, living and dining room bungalow in Hollywood. A nurse looks after six-year-old Amanda. Ginger cooks dinner, cleans house, and has a regular routine like any other housewife. Johnny doesn't get his own breakfast just to be mother's little helper. He's fussy about how things are cooked. Breakfast is a bit on the gourmet side, with kidneys and hominy, fried tomatoes, eggs, fried apples, and coffee.

Thus fortified, Johnny either locks himself in the study, away from telephones, or he goes to the composer's home for collaboration.

"The composer plays the tune over for me several times," says Johnny, "and I get sort of a mood from it. I search around until I get the right amount of syllables for the music, sort of da-da the rhythms in my mind. Then I like to get several titles for the same song. I pick the most natural. Sometimes I go around for days trying to think of one, and then again, it's like meeting a person and liking him immediately. Sometimes you get a title you like right off the bat." Johnny learns the melody after two hearings, writes out the lyrics on the typewriter.

If Johnny is just plugging along, he quits about one o'clock and goes to the office of the Capitol Record Company. But if he's hot on the trail of an idea, he sticks until he's got it.

"Sometimes the whole lyric comes in a big rush; sometimes it takes months. You don't write them all in thirty minutes. Lazybones took six months. Once you get your first draft, the real work of changing, polishing, editing, rewriting begins," he explains.

Usually around 1 P. M. he goes to the Capitol office in Hollywood to listen to songs for the record catalogue. He has a knack for picking hits. His formula is laconic and brief: "Just personal taste," he says. "That's all anyone can go by. You either like something or you don't."

Johnny generally lunches late at the Brown Derby. But luncheon is work, too, since it generally includes a conference with lawyers, business manager, and agent. Back at the office, he listens to more new songs and decides who will sing what. If he is doing a radio guest spot, he has an afternoon rehearsal at the studio. He'll do the broadcast for New York around four in the afternoon and the one for the West Coast at seven. Then he'll grab dinner on the fly, generally just a sandwich.

Afterward he'll make recordings from nine to midnight. He'll have learned the song by heart before he reaches the recording studio.

Capitol Record Company is owned jointly by Mercer, Glenn Wallichs, and Buddy De Sylva. The company was started in the spring of 1942. Astute Mr. Wallichs isn't releasing any dollars figures, but going on a 100-per-cent figure for 1942, the business increased 180 per cent in 1943; 480 per cent in 1944; and 980 per cent in 1945.

Where Johnny gives credit for the success of Capitol to Wallichs and De Sylva, Wallichs throws the bouquets to Johnny. "He picks hits because he chooses songs strictly on merit," says Wallichs. "If we could press two million of Johnny's records, it wouldn't satisfy the demand. He also knows how to pick talent while it's still unknown. Jo Stafford, Stan Kenton, the Pied Pipers, the King Cole trio, and Ella Mae Morse were just starting out when he picked them. Even Betty Hutton wasn't the star she is today."

Johnny brushes this tribute aside. Giving the other fellow credit is part of his personality. While other lyric writers will squabble about which is the more important to a song—the music or the words—Johnny says, "The tune is more important. You can have the most imaginative lyric in the world, but if the tune is no good, no one sings it. Songs were meant to be sung."

Another ingredient in the skyrocket success of Capitol is that Johnny understands people. There is an absence of big-business atmosphere. He never wants the company to grow so big that he would lose personal contact with the artist. As director of talent, business details often elude him. His favorite remark is: "I'm the president, but nobody ever tells me anything."

JOHNNY'S novelty numbers have been lifeblood to Capitol. They are often filled with the jive talk that is the bobby-soxer's delight. But Conversation While Dancing, with lyrics which go, "Do you know what's groovy? Have you seen the latest movie?" and "You're the kind of a chick that's sharp on top!" didn't evolve from the campuses of the nation. Johnny, who has invented a great share of the jive talk teenagers love, says, "Bobby-soxers picked it up from musicians' slang. Musicians have had that kind of lingo for a long time."

His uncanny ability *to write as the character he is writing about thinks* is the thing that makes his songs roll naturally and effortlessly off the tongue. In Atchison, he wrote as an engineer would speak:

Do yuh hear that whistle down the line?
I figure that it's engine number forty-nine.
She's the only one that'll sound that way
On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe.
See the ol' smoke risin' 'round the bend.
I reckon that she knows she's gonna meet a friend.
Folks around these parts get the time o' day
From the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe!*

There's as much rhythm in the flow of the words as in the music.

In Out of This World, he matches the eerie quality of the music with these words:

You're clear out of this world.
When I'm looking at you,
I hear out of this world
The music that no mortal ever knew.

But he can bring the most high-

* From the M-G-M picture, The Harvey Girls. Copyright, 1945, Leo Feist, Inc. Used by special permission Copyright Proprietor.

flown music down to earth by making it personal. As an illustration, Out of This World continues:

You're right out of a book,
The fairy tale I read when I was so high.
No armored knight out of a book
Could find a more enchanted Lorelei
than I.**

Both philosophy and psychology were combined in the camp-meetin' lyrics of Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive, to make one of the greatest song hits of all time. Yet it almost wasn't written. Johnny and tune writer Harold Arlen had just about finished the score of Here Come the Waves. With a singer like Crosby, every song in the picture was due for a terrific plug. Still, Johnny and Harold didn't feel they had a hit tune. About this time, Johnny, who enjoys a series of worries and aches, went to see a psychologist. "You've got to accentuate the positive," advised the doctor.

Johnny was thinking about it the night he and Harold were stuck.

"I guess we'll have to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative," said Johnny, clowning. They looked at each other. "What's wrong with that?" asked Arlen. "O.K.," said Johnny. "Let's write it."

It took three weeks to write it and the song made each of them $25,000. Not only did Johnny make a neat sum out of the lyrics, but his recording topped all other recordings of the number. This was because Johnny turned on his Southern accent and got the spirit of a Negro camp meeting into the song.

For recreation Johnny enjoys a nice slow game of golf. "I used to play tennis," he says sadly, "but it's too strenuous. With golf, you can always quit at the ninth hole." He spends summers at his beach house, where he goes surf fishing. He used to love to go dancing and he still follows the bands. His favorite evening is to go to someone's house for dinner. And he's a pushover for parties. But there's one thing he doesn't like about parties, and that's people who ask him to sing his own songs.

He never gives parties himself. There isn't room in his small house. He doesn't have the Hollywood penchant for a big show place with a swimming pool and playhouse. The Mercers live conservatively. Johnny pays about $125 for his suits, and claims his only luxury is going to good restaurants. He drives a Cadillac convertible and he probably won't buy a new one even with the war over. The keeping-up-with-the-Joneses spirit which prevails in so much of Hollywood simply passed the Mercers by. It isn't as if they couldn't put up a front. For Johnny netted $100,000 last year. And he's lazy, remember?

THE END

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SILICONES—MIRACLE MATERIAL

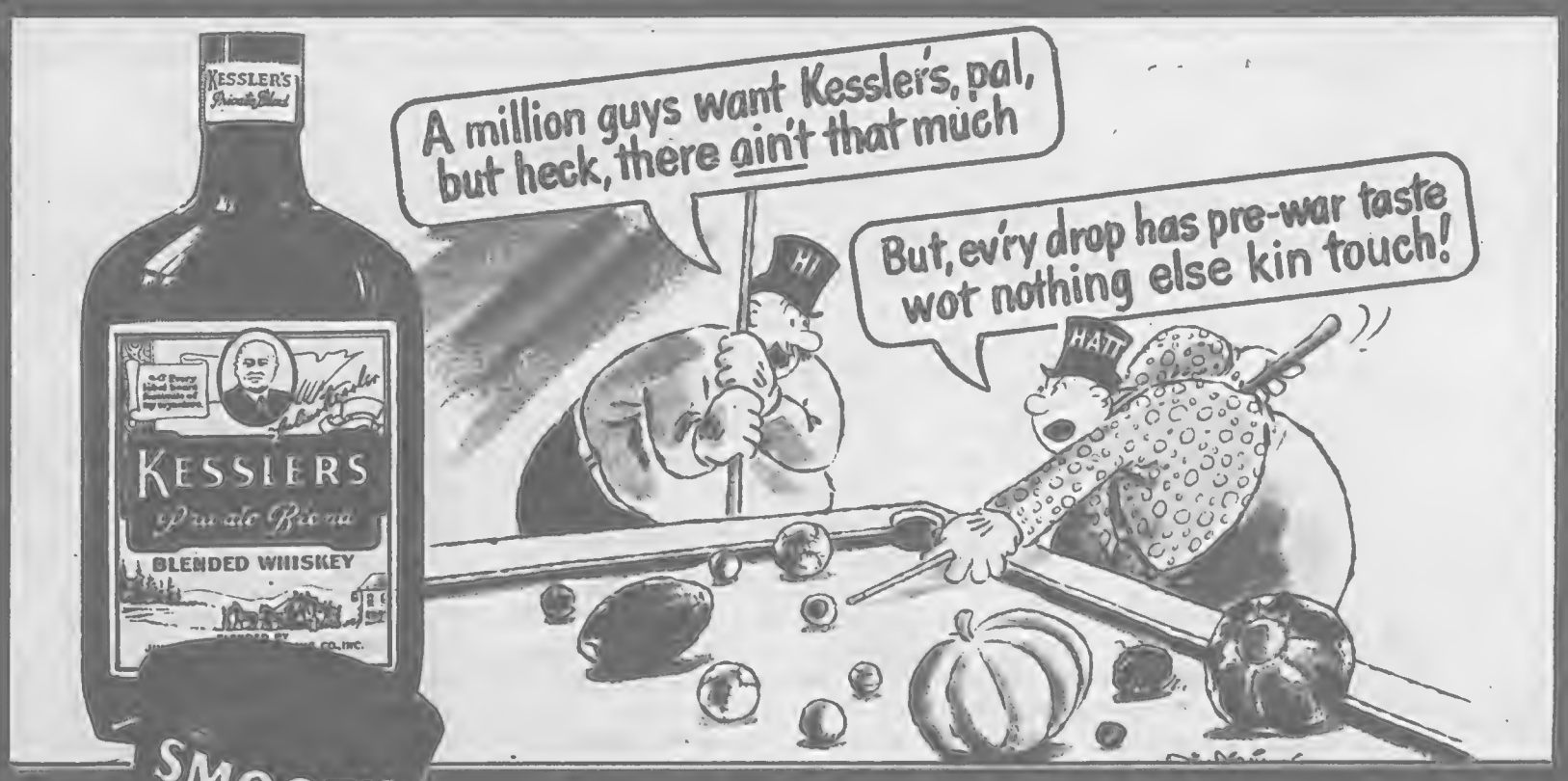
Continued from Page 19

before the war, the research engineers started to do things with them.

But their greatest development came with the war. We will hear more and more about this new synthetic for an astonishing variety of everyday uses, from waterproofing trout flies to window polish, from high-temperature paint to electrical insulation. No one, not even the chemical engineers who developed silicones, can write down a complete list of uses, not even of the most important ones. The plain truth of the matter is that engineers stayed up nights trying to satisfy Uncle Sam's war demands and had almost no time to check carefully on what all silicones will do for you and me. But there are some tantalizing prospects. As a waterproofing, for example.

In a silicone-test laboratory, a motor-driven arm moves slowly back and forth. To it are fastened two short narrow strips of leather, seemingly identical. As the arm oscillates, the leather pieces are flexed, much as is the leather on the top of a shoe as one walks. The laboratory technician places a few drops of water on each strip where it bends. In a few seconds the water seeps through one strip at the recurring

"Take a cue from experts!"— says HI to HATT


KESSLER'S
KESSLERS
BLENDED WHISKEY
A million guys want Kessler's, pal, but heck, there ain't that much
HI
But, ev'ry drop has pre-war taste wot nothing else kin touch!
HATT

SMOOTH AS SILK but not "High Hat"

KESSLER'S BLENDED WHISKEY

True Pre-War Quality

KESSLER'S PRIVATE BLEND. 75% Grain Neutral Spirits. 85 Proof. Julius Kessler Distilling Co., Incorporated, Lawrenceburg, Ind.

crease and begins to drip off the bottom side. On the other leather strip the water continues to stand as droplets; the leather shows no tendency to absorb the water. The first strip is ordinary leather of which shoes are made. The second is the same leather—but it has been treated with a silicone liquid.

Leather gaskets for gas meters impregnated with a silicone liquid have already had double the life of ordinary leather gaskets and are still going strong.

A silicone applied to most surfaces makes them water resisting. Chemists are yet unwilling to predict all the ways in which silicones can be used as waterproofing, but quite conceivably they may be applicable to textiles so that the ordinary suit of clothes will shed water like a rubber raincoat. Applied to silks or nylon, better and lighter raincoats and umbrellas may result.

Silicone as a moisture-resisting surface treatment works best on glass surfaces, hence the raincoats and umbrellas of tomorrow may consist of fabrics of glass fibers impregnated with silicones. Glass cloth treated with silicone is being used for conveyor belts in food-processing plants. Silicone-treated shower curtains, perhaps of glass cloth, although they will cost more, should last for years. Tents and awnings can be made both more completely leakproof and longer lived by applying silicone to the fabric. Fishermen's trout flies, predipped in silicone, remain as waterproof as a live fly.

ON silicone-treated surfaces water stands up in droplets instead of spreading evenly over the surface, causing thorough wetting. This fact has already been put to use in the electrical industry. Insulators of porcelain and glass with surfaces of silicone do not become completely wet with rain or humidity and hence retain their electrical insulating strength to a far greater degree.

Visitors to the Dow-Corning plant in Midland, Michigan, where silicones are made, are always asked to look at the roof of a low building through which extend several large round metal stacks. They are the exhaust stacks of large Diesel engines. All but one present a sorry sight, their paint having peeled off, showing the badly corroded metal beneath. The one exception appears freshly painted.

The stacks were all painted at the same time, one with a silicone-base paint, the others with ordinary metallic paint. The high temperature —around 500 degrees Fahrenheit— of the exhaust gases quickly destroyed the ordinary paint, but the silicone-base paint withstands this heat with no apparent deterioration.

Silicone paints are already in widespread use around oil refineries where there is much high-temperature apparatus and corrosive atmospheres. Oven trays made of block iron, used to dry mineral containing traces of sulphuric acid, were eaten through in ten days by the acid and 500-degree heat. Silicone-painted trays after two months needed only a repainting.

Silicone as a base for paints that must endure heat or moisture or both seems to have a great future. However, before such paints are completely practical, much research must yet be done, largely on the matter of pigments or colors with which to mix with the silicone base.

The airplane in which you will fly across the continent or the ocean in a few hours will be able to fly higher, above the weather, because of silicone. In fact, silicones are already doing this for the Army.

The necessity for our fighting planes to fly higher and higher developed early in the war. Then, to the dismay of the officials of the Air Forces, our high-flying planes struck a new difficulty. At these high altitudes the electrical ignition systems broke down. The insulation of high-voltage ignition cables was being destroyed by a phenomenon called corona by electrical engineers. Corona was not new. It had long been troublesome to high-voltage electric-power lines, but in the rarefied air of 30,000 and 40,000 feet it is many times more severe. The matter was serious. Certain new types of fast planes, designed for high altitudes and desperately needed to help turn back the still advancing enemy, were grounded by this unanticipated malady. Something had to be done about corona—but fast.

Another malady was almost equally serious. Moisture condensing in ignition-cable connections was too often the cause of failure of the Navy's carrier planes. Something had to be done about moisture, too.

Something was done and quickly. A chemist from the Dow Chemical Company saw in silicones a possible solution of the problem. In a matter of a few weeks, a soft, colorless silicone grease was prepared which neither melted nor hardened, resisted corona, and excluded moisture.

A FLOCK of P-47 Thunderbolts had to cross the Atlantic—quick. Engine experts feared the ignition connections wouldn't stand the Atlantic crossing. But the risk had to be run. Without time for engine tests, the new silicone compounds were applied. Every plane made the hop successfully. Corona and moisture had been licked. Silicone had turned the trick. Today the ignition cables of all aircraft engines are filled with the new sealing compound.

Corning Glass Company research engineers, faced with a very practical problem, first began experimenting with silicones about ten years ago. They had made a new kind of electrical insulation out of glass fibers. Being of glass, it could withstand much more heat than electrical tapes of linen or cotton. But when applied to an electrical machine, it still had to be dipped in varnish so the spaces between the fibers would be filled. Unfortunately, ordinary varnish, being an organic material, has the same limitations under heat as the old cotton and linen tapes. To be of maximum usefulness, glass tape needed a companion liquid insulation that was its equal in heat resistance.

Searching for an answer, the Corning engineers came across Professor Kipping's silicones. It was a ten-strike. Varnishes could be made out of silicones and applied to glass-fiber tape in the usual way, *i.e.*, by dipping. Then, upon being baked, they provided a hard, completely filled insulation that can withstand temperatures of 350 degrees, whereas ordinary varnish tapes char a few hours at 350 degrees.

THE result is that electric generators and motors can often be made smaller, saving weight and space. Such electrical machines will run longer, with heavier loads, with less chance of burnout. Already this insulation has been put to work on motors of all sorts. Tests conducted by Dow-Corning and Westinghouse have shown that motors built with silicone-and-glass insulation can run indefinitely at temperatures 100 degrees hotter than motors with ordinary insulation, which burn out in a few hundred hours.

A silicone is like dozens of other common materials, such as nylon and cellophane. It is manufactured in such plants as the Dow-Corning plant in Michigan, and at General Electric, which has just announced a new multi-million-dollar factory for this purpose. It is an example of molecule engineering in which chemists take atoms of different elements found in nature and cause them to combine in just the right way to form huge molecules.

To make a silicone, the chemist starts with sand, brine, coal, and petroleum. From sand he gets silicon. Each atom of silicon has, in effect, four hands with which to join to other atoms. By a complex series of chemical reactions, the chemist causes atoms of silicon and oxygen to link together alternately, chain fashion. Then on each of the two remaining outstretched hands of each silicon member of the chain the chemist places a hydrocarbon molecule he gets from petroleum. Thus he constructs a silicone molecule. By controlling the length of the silicone-oxygen-silicon-etc. linkage and by varying the hydrocarbon units, he can get different kinds of silicone molecules.

Instead of the Grignard reagents, General Electric chemists have developed a new method to prepare the compounds needed for the manufacture of silicones. A compound such as methyl chloride, which is the gas used in many refrigerators, is passed over metallic silicon.

There are hundreds of thousands of possible combinations, of which only a few thousand have been made

and tested. Each one has some differences of its own, yet each manifests the family traits of resistance to cold, to heat, and to moisture. What the remaining unborn members of this prodigious family will be like, no one yet knows. One can safely wager that some, like their earlier brothers, will be geniuses.

One branch of this family is like rubber. It was developed first by General Electric; later by Dow-Corning. It looks like rubber, feels like rubber. It stretches, it bounces. It can do many things rubber can't —withstand heat, for example.

The lens ring on big electric-arc searchlights used by the Navy gets very hot from the arc. The surfaces where the ring clamps onto the metal hood reach over 500 degrees Fahrenheit, far too hot for any ordinary rubber gasket to long survive. Then, when not in service, a searchlight may undergo the ice and salt spray of an ocean storm, far below zero. No ordinary material can endure such temperature extremes. For this reason searchlights have had to go without gaskets, just depending on tight metal-to-metal fits to keep water out. But these fits never do. Now Navy men no longer have to keep spare carbons handy to replace the wet ones, because silicone rubber gaskets retain their resiliency at 50 below zero and do not harden and crack at 500 above.

SILICONE rubber is not expected to be a competitor of natural or other types of synthetic rubber for such things as tires. At least, not right away. This is because silicone rubber is not as strong and does not resist abrasion as well. However, silicone rubber is improving right along. It is not impossible that some day long-life automobile tires will be made of silicone rubber.

Not all members of any family as large as that of silicones can be geniuses. There is bound to be a playboy in the bunch. One silicone has been christened "bouncing putty" by its General Electric inventor. It is a soft white substance of about the consistency of taffy. Rolled into a ball, it will bounce from a floor or wall and in a few minutes it will have spread out flat like warm fudge in a pan. Bouncing putty, thus far, is only a chemical oddity. No practical use has yet been advanced for it—but one never knows.

The world is getting smaller, so people say. But, in another sense, the world is growing larger. Although there can be no discoveries of new land continents, the chemists are adding to our world by the synthetic creation of whole new families of materials, of which the silicones are but one. It is the creation of something man has not had before. Silicones, by permitting some things to be done better, by making possible other things that couldn't previously be done at all, act to increase wealth—yours and mine.

THE END

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Several years ago, a great novel blazed its way into America's consciousness—James M. Cain's "The Postman Always Rings Twice". It was dialogue like this that held you: *"I love you, Cora. But love, when you get fear in it, isn't love any more. It's hate!"*

★ ★ ★ ★

At the time, many of us hoped it would be made into a motion picture. But the general opinion was: "Too daring... too shocking..." Remember this scene: *"Tomorrow night, if I come back, there'll be kisses... lovely ones, Frank! Kisses with dreams in them..."*

Recently, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer announced that it had produced "The Postman Always Rings Twice", starring Lana Turner and John Garfield. And everyone wondered how M-G-M would handle the more audacious scenes, like this one: *"We had all that love out there, that night... and we kissed and sealed it so it would be ours forever!"*

★ ★ ★ ★

Well, we have just seen the picture—and Lana Turner is breathtakingly beautiful as the temptress who is swept away by a love she can't deny. John Garfield, more vital than ever, turns in a masterful performance as the reckless young wanderer who wanted love more than he wanted life.

★ ★ ★ ★

Together, as Cora and Frank, they create one of the most memorable romances ever brought to the screen. And to match this great acting, there is a truly fine supporting cast including Cecil Kellaway, Hume Cronyn, Leon Ames, Audrey Totter, and Alan Reed.

★ ★ ★ ★

Congratulations are most certainly in order for Director Tay Garnett, Producer Carey Wilson, and Screenplaymen Harry Ruskin and Niven Busch.

★ ★ ★

Whether the Postman rings once, or the Postman rings twice, M-G-M has certainly rung the bell with this one.

—*Lea*

THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE

(RKO)
Dorothy McGuire
George Brent
Ethel Barrymore

The stairs that lead to murder.

ALL of the old, reliable catchwords such as "suspense," "exciting drama," etc., will have to be somehow broadened in order to describe this beautiful job. Dore Schary has produced The Spiral Staircase—which won't exactly make Hitchcock look silly, but will certainly make him move over on that throne of his.

Each element is outstanding, and it's hard to say which is most so—probably Dorothy McGuire's performance as a mute servant girl. Judging by the number of lines, it's a small part, but the scope of emotion she puts forth is practically unlimited.

She's become a profound actress, for a fact, especially considering that here she competes with such old mistresses of the art as Ethel Barrymore and Elsa Lanchester. Barrymore as the bedridden mother of two weak sons that she despises (George Brent and Gordon Oliver) is a magnificent paranoiac.

Unlike Diary of a Chambermaid, reviewed in this issue, The Staircase does not get drowned in heavily detailed characterizations. The general atmosphere is presented as lovingly as the people are. In the opening scene there is a masterful double-play in a small-town hotel involving a nickelodeon screening downstairs and the strangling of a lame waitress on the second floor.

It's one of a series of murders, all by strangulation, and all directed against deformed young girls. Consequently there's high apprehension at the old house where McGuire works. Everyone counsels her not to worry, and then in the next breath advises her to have complete distrust.

The spiral staircase itself is played up subtly by the photographer, and is the scene of the thrilling climax. Surprise angle aside, it's plenty dramatic—even if you knew all along who the murderer was.

The setting is New England, 1906—but the picture doesn't come out as just a spooky tintype. It's a modern, penetrating treatment, for which a great many shouts of appreciation.

Rhys Williams and Elsa Lanchester tell McGuire the odds are slightly in favor of her not getting killed.

DON'T GET STUCK WITH A FARM

Continued from Page 13

vantage. It has been shown that the more people at work on a given area of land, the lower the amount produced per head. It is the amount produced per worker that determines incomes. Of course the number that can be employed at maximum rates of productivity per head varies according to the kind of farming. Intensive vegetable farming obviously allows for more people per unit of land than extensive dry-land wheat farming. But it is easy to crowd too many workers onto the land and so cut down average income. A few people producing a lot is better than a lot of people producing a little. If we can get all we need from American farms with fewer workers on them, then that should be our aim. We'll be better off and so will the workers still on the land. Since the period 1910-14, production per worker has increased 80 per cent. The end is not yet. The period immediately ahead may well be one of especially rapid advance. A lot of this advance will be lost if it has to be split up among too many people.

It follows that if we need fewer farm workers, we must have more jobs for people off the land. We cannot allow people to be forced off the farms with no place to go. They must have something better to do—better for themselves and for us. If the nation's economy is healthy, they will find places in the factories, offices, stores, and so on. The movement from the farms has been going on with increasing rapidity since about 1870. It is an important index to our economic progress and constantly improving living standards. We cannot afford to have it stopped now. If the farms must take care of people for whom we have no jobs elsewhere, then living standards on the farms will fall lower and lower.

THAT is why the farm experts emphasize that prosperous conditions for factory, office, and retail-store workers are indispensable to farm prosperity.

If there aren't enough jobs at good wages in the cities, a movement to the farms won't be good for anybody. Under such conditions the farmers also would be suffering depression. And to take refuge on a farm merely to get something to eat is the last thing an intelligent person would want to do. If the United States gets to the point where there is a widespread scramble for mere subsistence, then it won't matter too much where you are, for the jig will be up. Only a few extreme alarmists envisage any such state of affairs.

Nevertheless, more people will be looking for farms than there are farms. There is no longer a land frontier in this country where farms can be carved out of virgin soil. Instead, new farms can only be added to the national total by irrigation and drainage, which are expensive and difficult ways of making farms. And they don't promise to add many in any case. It is estimated by the Department of Agriculture that not more than 40,000 will be added by these two methods in the near future. One great block of irrigated farms will be created in the Columbia River Valley in the State of Washington. But local authorities do not expect the new farms to do much more than replace old farms abandoned for one reason or another elsewhere in the Northwest.

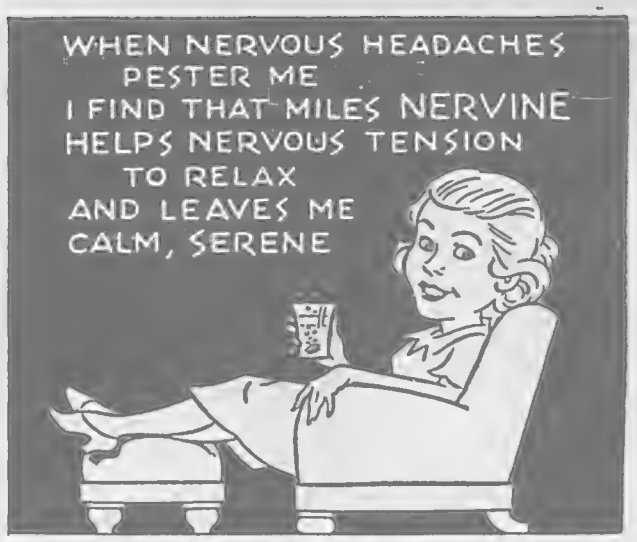
About 10,000 farms may become available when the armed services dispose of the excess land in their possession. Only a few can be made by subdividing existing large farms. The trend is all the other way. Small farms are being consolidated into larger units to get enough land to provide a good living. It has been discovered that dividing farms has been carried too far already.

THE most promising way in which farms will become available is through the death or retirement of the men now running them. A careful estimate shows that perhaps 110,000 farms producing incomes worth considering here will become available shortly in these ways. But not all of them will be open to veterans and ex-war workers. Many will pass directly to sons or relatives of the present owners; and these may or may not be veterans or other newcomers to the land. At best, only about three out of four of the farms will come on the market for purchase by outsiders. This will open up around 80,000 farms.

Finally, about 40,000 working farmers will leave the land each year for some other line of work. Some of these farms will be worth buying, but it is difficult to say how many.

All these figures are informed estimates by the Department of Agriculture. If they could be added up, the total number of farms which would become available from these sources would run between 170,000 and 200,000. But it is dangerous simply to add up the figures. However, it is true that around 300,000 farms and tracts of land useful for farming were sold in 1943. This means that because of high prices a lot of farms may come on the market which otherwise would not be available. Even if the 300,000 figure is correct, this means about a farm for every third man in the armed services who thinks he wants one. The civilians who want to go on the land now that war work is finished also will enter the competition. The only possible result is that prices will be bid up. If our estimates are too large, as they may be, the competition for farms will be proportionately more fierce, and the prices higher.

This is a dangerous situation. It may result in bidding up the price of farms to prohibitively high levels. And such an upswing would come



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at a time when land prices are already too high. Farmers have been using their high wartime incomes first to liquidate their old debts, and then, in the absence of any other way to spend their money, to buy land. City people also are buying farms as a "hedge" against inflation. The result is that competition for good farm land has been driving prices up even before the war veterans and war workers get into the market. Prices are today more than 40 per cent above prewar levels.

If the veterans have to buy in at high prices, they will be permanently handicapped. They will have too much money tied up in land; will have to meet too-high interest bills on borrowed funds; and too large a proportion of their operating income will have to go to the bank to meet the interest bills. This will be particularly true if, as seems certain, prices for farm commodities fall in the future. The worth of farm land should be calculated in relation to long-term price trends, not wartime high prices.

Caught with a farm that cost too much in a period when prices are falling, the only possible "outs" are bankruptcy, a low standard of living for the operator, or increased efficiency of production. Before the war, it was estimated that a farmer would have to invest about $7,000 to have a net income of $15 a week; for $30 a week, about $10,000 would have had to be invested. This is a rough indication of what should be a reasonable investment for comparable incomes in the predictable future. Caution is necessary if more has to be invested to ensure such returns, especially if you are borrowing the money. You may end up with far less spendable income, and maybe go bankrupt after all.

INCREASED efficiency of farm production with less labor is not accomplished entirely by using more and more machines. It is also due to the use of better seeds, better fertilizers, better cultivation techniques, and better harvesting and preserving methods. Farming has become a highly skilled occupation. Gone are the days when any dub could farm successfully. An education in agriculture will be as indispensable to success as an education in engineering or medicine.

The trend today is toward elaborately equipped farms on which intensive production is the rule. Such farms supply most of the produce for the markets, though they represent only a small percentage of the total number of farms.

There are about 6,000,000 farms in the United States. Of these, the top 2,000,000 produced 84 per cent of the agricultural commodities sold in 1939. The next block of 2,000,000 supplied only 13 per cent, and the bottom 2,000,000 supplied only 3 per cent of the total. Few newcomers to farming will want to buy in at the bottom. If they do, it will only be with the idea of building up to a place in the middle or top group. That will involve a lot of work.

The top 2,000,000 farms are of two types: the so-called large-scale, intensive factory-farms, and the cream of the family-commercial farms. Family-commercial farms are run by a single family primarily to supply goods to the commercial market. The middle 2,000,000 consist of the less productive and profitable family-commercial farms and a mixed lot of part-time and residential farms that have small surpluses of goods for sale. The bottom group is largely comprised of farms where the basic purpose is to get practically all the family living off the land with a little over for cash income. These are poor propositions. For practical purposes, only the top and middle groups are worth considering.

Though the so-called family-commercial farms are being crowded hard, they are the most attractive bets for newcomers and always have been. They are still far more numerous than any other kind. But only the very best of them are prosperous and secure. If you want one, you'll have to pay a good price.

IT is because of the shifting about that is going on in American farming that the farmers are splitting into two groups. The so-called big farmers fall into such groups as the American Farm Bureau Federation, led by Edward A. O'Neal. The small farmers are organized into such groups as the Farmers' Union, led by James G. Patton. The feeling between the two groups is far from good. What interests us here, however, is that the small farmers feel they are on the defensive against the big farmers. Their ideal is the family-commercial farm.

They say, however, that family-commercial farms can only survive in large numbers in the future if the government makes it a policy to save them. Otherwise more and more of them will be put out of business by the mechanized, intensive farms. James G. Patton says they will require a government-guaranteed income to make life on them tolerable.

While agriculture as a whole and family-commercial farming in particular may appear to win security under such a program as Patton proposes, the appearance will be an illusion; and it will be an illusion that will cost the taxpayers and consumers plenty to create and keep in existence. To take one item only: the Farmers' Union recently asked the government to spend two billion dollars "if needed," to maintain parity (that is, artificially high) prices. To find the proper place for agriculture in a twentieth-century economy will involve much harder thinking than is involved in such "security" programs as that of the Farmers' Union. But the fact that Patton argues as he does proves my point that the family-commercial farm is in a difficult position today, except when it is most efficiently managed.

All this makes it extremely easy

to get stuck with a farm. Unless you can buy in at the top at a reasonable price and can finance the equipment, and, above all, can bring extensive knowledge to the management of your property, stay away from the land. That is, stay away if you are looking for a way to earn a living.

If you like country living and have some other source of income, then you will be all right on a "farm." But you won't be farming; you'll simply be living in the country. If you buy a farm with the idea of wresting a living off it, watch your step. It's easier to get stuck than you think.

THE END

HOSTESS IN THE SKY

Continued from Page 17

Winnipeg route. She flew it once as student observer during her training.

That preliminary training was a grueling stretch—six weeks of study and drill and lectures on manifest forms and ticketing, on routes and schedules and meteorology and airplanes. She took exercises to get into good physical shape and studied first aid to keep others the same way.

She learned to walk backward in a plane without falling, to use a model's "closed stance," and to stand attractively without grabbing for support whenever the plane swayed.

She learned to arrange appetizing trays and serve hot meals at 8,000 feet. Finally she took a check flight to test her skill.

Girls no longer have to be registered nurses to qualify as air-line stewardesses. Before the war, that was necessary, partly to reassure nervous passengers. But war subpoenaed the nurses, the passengers became air-confident, and now any college girl who embodies the three Ps has a chance to fly at her work.

The three Ps—Personality, Poise, and Pulchritude—win plaudits for the stewardess and dollars for the air line. Of these three, the least is Pulchritude. More important are Grade A general appearance and a personality that makes people sit up and smile.

There are other points, too—such as standing between five feet two and five feet six (give or take an inch or so, depending on the air line). And when you step on the doctor's scales, the pointer should stop in the 100 to 126 neighborhood—the poundage to match your height. You can't wear glasses, and most air lines want you between twenty-one and twenty-six. It will help if you've had at least two years of college, with a generous leavening of social activity and group leadership.

The air lines are edging more and more toward already trained stewardesses. They want their girls to know meteorology and planes, first aid and food service when they're hired, instead of wasting six to eight weeks of flying time in training. One line—Northwest—recently converted completely to this all-ready-to-fly standard. They say they will now hire only young women who can demonstate their knowledge of these four fields and who have had schooling in personal grooming and physical conditioning besides.

The school route looks right now like a way in—although a more expensive way—for some who hope to wear the chic uniform and single wing of a sky stewardess.

The most controversial requirement of all is: You can't be married! This ban is a sore point with some of the girls, but there's a reason for the rule. Stewardesses frequently have to be shifted from base to base to meet schedule changes and fill vacancies. So if Eastern Airlines, for example, wanted to move a married stewardess from its Miami base to Atlanta, her Miami-working husband wouldn't be happy.

But on the other side of the marriage picture, stewardesses get plenty of proposals. At least 85 per cent of them resign to the tune of wedding bells. And many of them marry pilots. This is a far cry from the reaction of pilots when the world's first air-line stewardesses

(*Continued on page 72*)

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THE THROPP

WHAT'S OLD HERMAN THROPP COOKING UP?
IT'S OZZIE WHO'S DOING THE COOKING
YEP. THEY SAY THE KID'S GONNA PUT ON A NEW KIND OF STRIP TEASE-RIGHT IN THE WINDOW
STRIP TEASE?
IT CAN HAPPEN HERE! TOMORROW AT 3:30!
THROPP'S PH
STRIP TEASE INDEED! I'LL SOON PUT AN END TO THIS VULGARITY!
JEEPERS! HERE'S WHERE OZZIE GETS IT!
HOLY SMOKE! WHERE'S OZZIE? I BETTER TELL HIM!
HE IS LEFT TO GO TO LA MODE STORE TO GET FANCY MODEL FOR TOMORROW
THEN IT'S A DEAL, MRS VAN PELT? YOU LEND ME A MODEL, PLUS THE NECESSARY LINGERIE, AND I FEATURE YOUR NAME IN MY SHOW?
FAIR ENOUGH. I'LL GO GET YOU THE GIRL
TOO BAD, SONNY, THE DEAL IS OFF! I CAN'T RISK POLICE PUBLICITY
NONSENSE, MRS. VAN PELT THE OLD BAT CAN'T BE SERIOUS. I ASSURE YOU--
COUNT ME OUT, FAT BOY-- YOU DON'T KNOW THAT HAG!
MAYBE YOU BETTER DROP THE WHOLE IDEA, OZ?
QUIET, SLUDGE-HEAD! I MUST FIND A WAY TO TURN MRS FRIMM TO MY OWN ADVANTAGE I'LL NOT ALLOW MYSELF TO BE BEATEN BY THAT UNBURIED CORPSE!

FAMILY

Written by **LAWRENCE LARIAR**
Illustrated by **DONLOU**

WHERE'S MR. THROPP? WHERE'S OZZIE? IS IT TRUE YOU'RE GOING TO DISPLAY NUDITY IN THAT WINDOW?
I AM ONLY CARPENTER, NOT INFORMATION PLEASE. PERHAPS YOU WILL ASKING MR. THROPP WHEN HE COMES FROM LUNCH?
THERE'S NO NEED TO ASK ANY MORE QUESTIONS. I AM GOING DIRECTLY TO THE POLICE! I SHALL INSTRUCT THEM TO ARREST MR. THROPP AS SOON AS HIS EXHIBITION BEGINS!
THIS OLD LADY IS PERHAPS CRAZY?

THIS IS GLORIA. SHE'LL DO, I'M SURE
INDEED SHE WILL! A MORE LUSCIOUS EXAMPLE OF FEMININE PULCHRITUDE I'VE NEVER SEEN
HOLD UP, OZZIE! I GOT BAD NEWS!

RELAX, PIN-HEAD! WHAT'S PERCOLATING?
IT'S OLD MRS. FRIMM! SHE'S GOING TO THE COPS TO ARREST YOUR POP IF HE PUTS ON THE SHOW!
MRS. FRIMM? OH, BROTHER!

NOW WHAT?
EUREKA! OUR WORRIES ARE OVER! OUR SHOW WILL GO ON AS PER SCHEDULE, AND THE MORE COPS SHE BRINGS, THE GREATER OUR SUCCESS!

HELLO! DAILY BLADE? I'D SUGGEST YOU SEND AN ACE REPORTER AND A LENS MAN DOWN TO THE THROPP DRUGSTORE TOMORROW AT 3:30! YOU CAN EXPECT A MINOR RIOT!
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2 Your teeth *need* longer polishing action.

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IODENT

and for teeth easy to bryten—especially children IODENT No. 1.

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Continued next week

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(Continued from page 69)

were assigned to the United Air Lines fleet sixteen years ago. The first of the original stewardesses was Ellen Church (during the war a captain in the Army Nurse Corps—Air Evacuation Service), who finally persuaded skeptical United officials to give the stewardess idea a try. Pilots then were primarily interested in pushing the air mail through, and weren't keen about frills that would increase the "passenger nuisance."

The passengers, however, liked the "sky girls" from the start, and almost at once United was forced to employ more. Today every domestic air line and a dozen foreign lines have stewardess service.

As to salary, a stewardess flies only 80 to 125 hours for each month's pay check. That pay check at American Airlines, for example, starts at $125 a month and may be boosted by regular increases to a maximum of $180. The other lines have similar pay schedules.

HOW do you go about getting your name on an air-line check? The first step, if you're lucky enough to live in the same city with an air-line employment office, is to put on your most flattering outfit and make a personal appearance. Otherwise, you'd better write for specific requirements and an application blank. And don't set your heart on being a stewardess until you're actually wearing the uniform. Then you can enjoy it, for a stewardess does meet famous people. The United Nations Conference at San Francisco brought many international figures to the air liners. Northwest Stewardess Alice Korbel drew a couple of princes, complete with flowing robes, white turbans, and glittering jewels. They were Prince Faour el Faour and Price Fawaz el Shalon of Damascus, Syria. Just ask Miss Korbel if it didn't sound queer to hear a cheerful "Hi" issue from the depths of the bejeweled turbans every time she came up the aisle. She says they were charming princes and acknowledged her attentions with a "So sweet" and "So lovely" and occasionally a Syrian pat on the hand.

However, foreign princes aren't the only passengers who show their gratitude. Army-accustomed G.I.s can't believe a beautiful young woman is actually waiting on them, and grateful old ladies are continually embarrassing the stewardess by pressing tips on her.

She can't accept tips because it's her job to serve tired passengers. She must get them to their destinations rested and relaxed.

She herself returns exhausted from every flight, but she has about half the month off—one and two days at a time. That makes hers the most streamlined of all feminine careers and the one where she's most likely to succeed—in getting married. And if she does, that'll make a job for still another sky girl.

THE END

FIRES FROM NOWHERE

Continued from Page 18

cumulations of oily dust-laying compounds used for sweeping, with cotton waste used for wiping machines, with discarded burlap bags or wrappings from plants to which fertilizer particles still adhered.

Not long ago a half-million-dollar California mansion was destroyed by a blaze originating in a closet. In Illinois, eighteen inmates died in an asylum fire which started in a mop closet. In a Pittsburgh home for the aged, forty-eight died in a fire definitely traced to a floor-scraping machine filled with chips from an oiled floor and stored overnight in a closet under the stairs.

In the Midwest an icehouse was burned away from its contents of 12,000 tons of ice when the damp sawdust in the walls heated to the ignition point. This phenomenon occurs so commonly in industry that large storers of bituminous coal generally expect to find the lowest 10 per cent of the coal piles reduced to ashes, unless they've sprayed the piles with mineral oil or taken other precautions.

FIFTY years ago coal-laden ships used to vanish at sea with an uncanny regularity, suggesting that they were destroyed by their own cargoes. But while the spontaneous heating of soft coal still causes a number of fires on ships and in industrial plants—even in hotels and apartment houses—the quantities normally used in the average home have given no trouble. One fallacious preventive, however, is the wetting of soft coal before putting it in the bins. If anything, this could increase the risk unless the coal were actually stored under water, as much of it is in industry. Anthracite, incidentally, seems to offer no hazard even in its smallest sizes.

Obviously, spontaneous combustion is a grave problem in many industrial fields. Retail stores and schools also rate very high on the list of victims, mainly because of poor housekeeping. There are records of fires having started spontaneously in such things as a stack of cheap blankets in a store; a bolt of oilcloth for fishermen's slickers; painted canvas scenery, dried and rolled on a high-school stage; a case of rubber mackintoshes; a stack of advertising posters only forty-eight hours old, etc.

All these involved oil in some form on a combustible material. But oil is not the only substance that is dangerous. Many metals in a finely divided state, such as iron filings, bronze powder, etc., are subject to spontaneous heating. And they often generate temperatures that are high enough to ignite combustible containers. Other substances, such as the hydrides of phosphorus, ignite, when dry. This is the stuff used on the R. A. F.'s "calling cards" during

the war. Kept moist in the planes, these cards were scattered by the thousand over German forests suspected of concealing important war plants. When the phosphorus dried, it burst into flame, starting scores of fires in the woods.

Still other substances, such as potassium, take fire upon contact with water. But a more usual hazard is hay, which blazes up of its own accord when conditions are right. Thousands of barns have been destroyed from two to six weeks after hay was put away improperly cured. Salting has been used rather successfully as a preventive, although this method is not yet considered 100-per-cent effective. In any case, spontaneous combustion is one of the farm's most serious fire hazards. Perhaps the most spectacular demonstration of it occurred after the Vermont floods of 1927, when dozens of barns caught fire soon after the flood waters began to recede and after the hay had partially dried out. In one specific case the hay began to steam twenty-four hours after the water went down, bursting into flame on the second day.

Rural residents can also testify that water on quicklime will generate terrific heat. So can those who lived in Augusta, Georgia, in 1908 and saw the rising waters of a flood heat up lime stored in a score of residential cellars. For the wet lime started a million-dollar conflagration entirely surrounded by water!

TALKING about chemicals or quicklime or hay tends to make the whole subject seem a little remote to the average city dweller, but it isn't. For there are millions of furniture-polish cloths, oiled floor mops, paint rags and other suitable props in the typical household. A few years ago a fire marshal, lecturing on this subject, was challenged after the meeting by the sales manager of a mop concern who resented the implication that his product was dangerous.

The speaker invited the salesman to call at his office the next day and to bring a mop. When the latter appeared, the fire marshal set the mop on the far corner of his desk. Offering the visitor a cigar, he launched into a lengthy discourse to kill time.

Out of the corner of his eye the marshal watched the mop as he chatted. And when the pair were about half finished with their cigars, he suddenly interrupted himself to draw his caller's attention to the maligned mop. It was beginning to smoke and was uncomfortably hot to touch.

The salesman never knew that the fire marshal had tricked him by placing the oily mop where the hot sun would fall on it and speed up the chemical action of oil on cloth. But that trifling deception served to show him in less than a half hour a little tragedy that has happened unseen in many a home's broom closet.

That it doesn't happen more often is simply due to the fact that conditions are not always right: the amount of moisture, or the volume of ventilation, or the degree of warmth just doesn't happen to be ideal for rapid oxidation of the oil. When those factors are right, a fire results just as surely as dawn follows dark.

The householder's first precaution is simple enough: if oily floor sweepings, rags, cloths, mops, etc., must be kept indoors, they should be stored in air-tight metal containers in cool locations. And it is wise to remember that grease-stained overalls and work shirts come under the category of "oily cloths."

By far the greatest threat in the home, however, is trash. Those accumulations of junk in attics, cellars, and closets invariably hold a high proportion of soiled and dirty stuff susceptible to spontaneous heating. The classic example of what can pile up in American homes was produced by the first Clean-up Campaign of the Providence Fire Department. The campaign unearthed no fewer than 2,800 discarded mattresses—just one item collected by the trash carts in that drive!

THE bearing of all this on America's annual problem of 400,000 dwelling-house fires doesn't strike the householder nearly so forcibly as it does the fireman. The latter knows too well how many residential fires originate in trash. In scores of cities now the firemen have instituted voluntary home inspections during spring Clean-up Week. They perform this arduous job on their off time simply because they find it pleasanter to visit your house in dress uniform at 3 P. M. than in rubber coat and boots at 3 A. M.

The logic of this reasoning is eloquently borne out by the results. Providence, Rhode Island, cut its residential fire losses from $156,000 in the year before the clean-up to $62,000 for the year following; Worcester, Massachusetts, came down from $410,000 in dwelling-house losses to $134,000; Fort Worth, Texas, from $755,000 to $137,000; Memphis, Tennessee, from $607,000 to $219,000—all as a direct result of home clean-up campaigns.

Not only was the dollar loss lowered, but the number of residential fires also decreased. Memphis alone cut its yearly runs to dwellings from 1,103 to 498. The other three cities came down from an aggregate of about 2,000 fires to 1,080.

Obviously, other hazards than trash are uncovered in these inspections and clean-ups. But that doesn't alter the fact that when you eliminate rubbish and junk, you wipe out one of the gravest threats to our houses. And eliminating it is profitable, as the spring Clean-up Weeks have shown. For nothing else pays such a handsome dividend in immunity from fire—that stealthy threat which takes a home every other minute in the United States.

THE END

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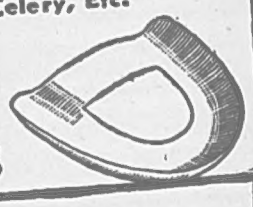

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MARCH 2, 1946

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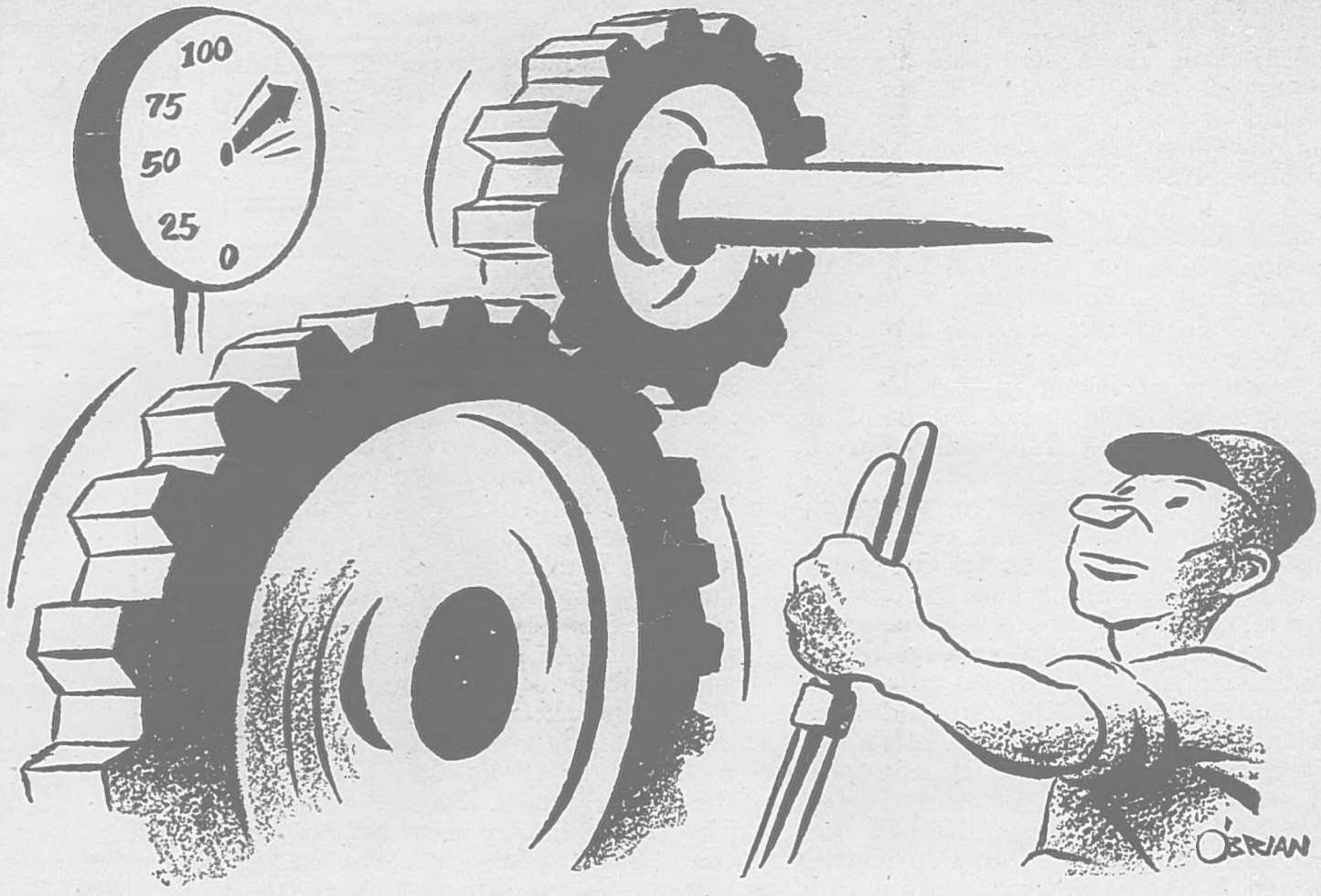


We've got to have super-efficient production.

ECONOMIC THEORY AND FACT

ORGANIZED labor has gotten, or is in process of getting, for itself substantial wage increases which will probably average—over all industry—somewhere in the neighborhood of 18 or 19 per cent. These new wage rates are far and away the highest paid anywhere and are so much above those prevailing before the war as to constitute a new era in our national economy. Only time can tell whether we will all be better off or worse off in this new era. It depends on whether the ingenuity of management and the diligence of the people drawing these higher wages can bring about compensating increases in productive efficiency.

A theory has been bandied about freely that these higher wages are not going to cost any of us common people anything, because they will come out of industry's profits. As Archie on the radio says, "Leave us not be naive." Industry does not make that much profit. Even during the boom war years earnings on invested money have been low. The stock that pays even as much as 5-per-cent return on the money it costs to buy it is the exception rather than the rule. A share of General Motors would have paid you $3 in dividends last year, but the lowest price at which you could have bought one during the year was $62. General Electric's lowest cost in 1945 was about $38 for a dividend of $1.60. If the earning power of money is forced any lower, it will not be worth while to risk investing it. The large aggregations of capital needed to carry on our mass-production industries will no longer be available.

Despite OPA ceilings, the consumer will be socked for the wage increases in one way or another. Perhaps industry will find ways to increase efficiency and thus maintain its profit margins without raising prices. If so, it will be a marvelous accomplishment. But *lower* prices, which increased efficiency has always meant in the past, are so far off as to be out of sight.

Actually, we will have taken a healthy stride on our way to hell in a hand basket unless productive efficiency *does* increase all down the line and all through the nation's economy. Rising prices mean inflation. The higher living standard labor sought eludes the grasp of the wage earner before he can nail it down, and turns instead into higher living costs. His fatter envelope buys less than it did before it got fat. Soon he must come back to ask for more money just to stay where he is. It's like being on a treadmill that goes faster and faster the more you run. To the unorganized millions who must earn a living, to the civil employees, to the old, the pensioners, and all others who must live on a fixed income, rising living costs are likely to prove sheer tragedy.

Organized labor has made its point, but in picking up its winnings it must remember it's only money and money is worth what it will buy. It is now up to labor to make every minute on the job count; to co-operate with management in achieving new peaks of efficient operation. We must have such a flood of goods that the dollars in labor's pocket will buy more and more instead of less and less.

Paul Hunter

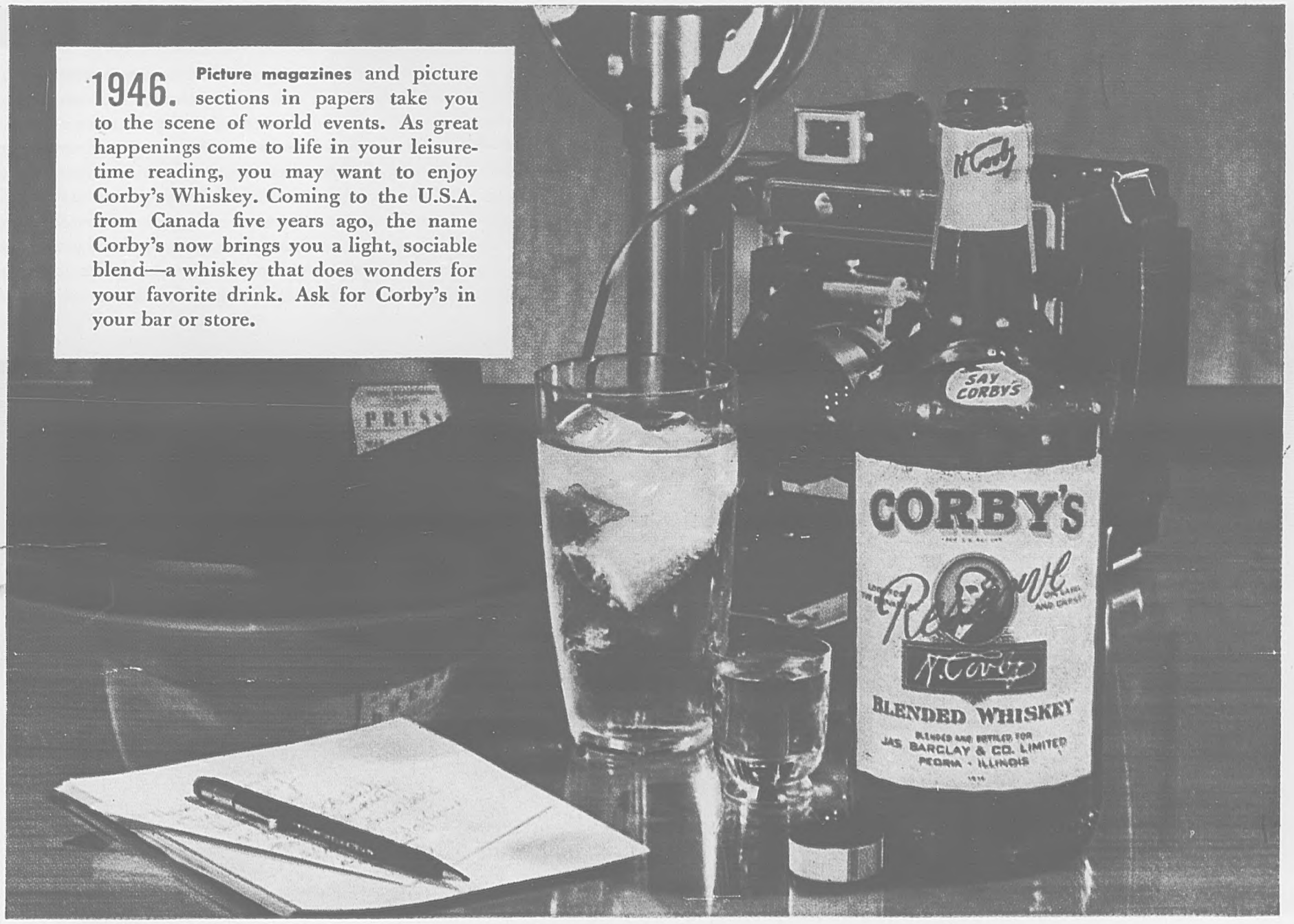
What's your favorite news photo?

1906. **News photos** have a way of sticking in the mind's eye. You may remember the rare photo above (shown with color added, as are others on this page) taken during San Francisco's earthquake, which occurred in Corby's 48th year of Canadian fame.

1914. **This picture** shows the arrest of Gavro Princep who had just shot and killed the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his wife. This act precipitated World War I in Corby's 56th year as a respected Canadian name.

1937. **One of the** all-time great photos—explosion of the Zeppelin Hindenburg at Lakehurst, as the giant ship nosed to its mooring after a trans-Atlantic voyage. Cameras were faster, pictures better, as Corby's reached its 79th year of Canadian renown.

1946. **Picture magazines** and picture sections in papers take you to the scene of world events. As great happenings come to life in your leisure-time reading, you may want to enjoy Corby's Whiskey. Coming to the U.S.A. from Canada five years ago, the name Corby's now brings you a light, sociable blend—a whiskey that does wonders for your favorite drink. Ask for Corby's in your bar or store.



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